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A COLLECTION OF

SUCCESSFUL MODERN PLAYS,

AS ACTED AT

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IN TEN VOLUMES.

VOL. X.

FASHIONABLE LEVITIES. WHICH IS THE MAN?
TIME'S A TELL-TALE. WHAT IS SHE?
LIE OF A DAY.

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FASHIONABLE LEVITIES:

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY LEONARD MACNALLY, ESQ.

CHARACTERS.

WELFORD,	*Mr Lewis.*
Sir BUZZARD SAVAGE,	*Mr Quick.*
Captain DOUGLAS,	*Mr Wroughton.*
CHEATERLY,	*Mr Farren.*
Colonel STAFF,	*Mr Wewitzer.*
NICHOLAS,	*Mr Edwin.*
Mr ORDEAL,	*Mr Henderson.*
Widow VOLATILE,	*Mrs Bates.*
CLARA,	*Mrs Martyr.*
CONSTANCE,	*Mrs T. Kennedy.*
Mrs MUSLIN,	*Miss Platt.*
GRACE,	*Mrs Wilson.*
HONOUR,	*Mrs Webb.*
Lady FLIPPANT SAVAGE,	*Miss Younge.*

SCENE—*Bath.* *Time—One day.*

FASHIONABLE LEVITIES.

ACT I.

SCENE—*Lady* FLIPPANT SAVAGE'S *Dressing-room.*

Enter GRACE *and Mrs.* MUSLIN.

Mrs. Mus. AND do you really prefer London Bath, Mrs. Grace?

Grace. Why, I do; in London there's such a noise—such rattling of carts, waggons, coaches, chariots and vis-a-vis; then at night its so charming to see the flambeaux flying about from house to house, like blazing stars!—But what have you got there for my lady, Mrs. Muslin?

Mrs. Mus. A few cards of laces.

Grace. Foreign, I hope—we hate every thing English, and wear nothing but foreign manufactures. (*Bell rings.*) My lady's bell.——Any new company come down?

Mrs. Mus. Have heard of none, except the wife and daughter of big Mr. Minikin, the great pin-maker from Threadneedle street. (*Bell rings.*)

Grace. Coming, my lady (*goes to a door in the back scene.*) It is only Mrs. Muslin, my lady.

Lady Flip. (within.) I'll be with her immediately.

Grace. Let me have a few words with you before you go—Sir Buzzard and my lady had such tifting yesterday, you never heard the like——They hate each other most affectionately, that is the truth of it——

Enter Lady FLIPPANT SAVAGE *through a door in the back scene.*

Lady Flip. So, Muslin, (*sits.*) Heigh ho! I'm all languor and lassitude!—Never knew Bath so dull—Scarce any person of fashion—Nobody one knows—This patch has a pretty effect—And you may go, Grace: and do you hear, Grace, let Miss Constance know I shall be ready to go out in half an hour.

Grace. Yes, my lady. [*Exit.*

Lady Flip. Muslin, take a chair;—this is certainly English rouge, a vulgar natural red.—Did you see my brute as you came in, Muslin?

Mrs. Mus. Saw two of them, dear pretty animals, in the hall, my lady; the little French dog was playing with the Spanish monkey.

Lady Flip. Muslin, are you mad!—my dog and monkey brutes! sweet creatures! I was enquiring after the brute my husband.

Mrs. Mus. I ask your ladyship's pardon; I saw Sir Buzzard with Colonel Staff, and Mr. Cheaterly in the great parlour.—But I have something to mention to your ladyship—here are the laces—(*opening the box*) but it is not about the laces I want to speak—but——

Lady Flip. But what?—Heigh ho! hand me the Olympian dew—Muslin, I saw a charming fellow at the play last night, and he saw me—Lady Holden certainly pencils her eyebrows—But the charming fellow, he took up my whole attention from the per-

formance——I flatter myself I engaged his—his eyes were never off me—was dressed in a new Parisian frock.——Hand me the volatile salts, Muslin.

Mrs. Mus. My lodger, I protest!—pick'd the pinion of a chicken at my humble table, last night, and never ceased talking of your ladyship.

Lady Flip. Hand me the rose water—he spoke of me, you say?—

Mrs. Mus. Heavens, said he, what an air!—what grace! then run on in praise of your ladyship's person and beauty; but when he heard your ladyship was married, poor youth, how piteously he sigh'd.

Lady Flip. Good natured charitable soul!—but his name—who is he?—what is he? whence came he?—and who are his relations, Muslin?

Mrs. Mus. Cannot answer one of your ladyship's questions, except that his name is Welford; he came to my house yesterday, and talks of leaving Bath to-morrow morning.

Enter GRACE.

Grace. Mr. Cheaterly requests permission to wait upon your ladyship.

Lady Flip. Shew him up. [*Exit* GRACE. Come to demand his winnings;—lost two hundred last night, could think of no card but the knave of hearts I saw at the theatre.

Mrs. Mus. The knave—the king of hearts your ladyship means; and let me tell you a trump—never saw finer eyes; then he has the leg of a soldier, and the hand of a lady——but is he to have the honour of——

Lady Flip. Of what?

Mrs. Mus. He says he has something of a serious nature to communicate to your ladyship.

Lady Flip. Perhaps letters from some of my friends in Paris.

Mrs. Mus. Saw a large bundle of letters on his table.

Lady Flip. Then, Muslin, I leave his introduction to you—shall be at home all the morning.

Mrs. Mus. Your ladyship's most obedient—I leave the laces. (*going.*) Never saw a handsomer gentleman. [*Exit.*

Lady Flip. What a giddy creature am I? But a body must kill time—then the fellow is so elegant, (*rises*) and Sir Buzzard so peevish!——the fatigue and apprehension which body and mind suffer after an unlucky run are insupportable; my nerves are quite out of tune, but Muslin has in some degree elevated my spirits.

Enter CHEATERLY.

Cheat. I condole with your ladyship on your hard run last night; the aces conspired against you:—Renounce brag, the cunning of the game lies, not in —judgment of mind, but in command of muscles.

Lady Flip. To which I impute your uninterrupted series of good luck.

Cheat. I am unfit for brag;—the warmth of my heart, particularly in your ladyship's presence, (*bows low*) keeps my features in continual rebellion,—but no person with a flexible countenance should touch brag, the impenetrable looks of lady Frigid Midnight have established her an adept at the game.

Lady Flip. And her nimble fingers give her command of the cards; but she lost temper when I got the black knaves; it was when you stood on my right, and lord Lackacre on my left hand.—"I have got the black knaves," said I, "Lady Frigid"—"I see you have," said she, pointing to you and my lord,—then, as she puckered up her mouth in an affected smile, down fell a few flakes of paint, and her skin appeared under the fractures, like *old* brick-

work peeping through the *new* invented composition.

Cheat. Her countenance was once tolerable, but a long run of ill luck has stamped that irrisible discordancy, of hill and dale, which marks her visage, and prevents the smiles of fortune, joy, or good humour, from unbending her to a laugh, or the smallest semblage of the amiable. (*Hums a tune.*) There is a small matter between us, for which I have a very pressing occasion.

Lady Flip. (*Aside.*) I expected this! Ha! ha! ha! I cannot but laugh at your description of Lady Frigid.

Cheat. For heaven's sake say no more of her;—but, let me have the money. (*Bows.*)

Lady Flip. The money! Psha! You must have patience.

Cheat. Patience for a debt of honour!

Lady Flip. I have bills to pay—my mercer, milliner, and mantua-maker, are to be with me tomorrow, and people of that class, you know, are rude and importunate.

Cheat. But suppose I point out a mode of discharging this debt of honour without diminishing your ladyship's purse—what say you?

Lady Flip. If you have any thing to propose I can honourably receive, speak out.

Cheat. Your ladyship is not usually slow of apprehension;—it is true, I have not made an open declaration of my passion.

Lady Flip. Sir!

Cheat. But my eyes, my looks, have spoke the workings of my soul.

Lady Flip. (Goes from him confused.) This I never suspected. *(Aside.)*

Cheat. May I hope for your assistance towards my happiness? I have long loved, doated, and despaired.

Lady Flip. Long loved and doated! I'm not surprised at that. *(Aside.)*

Cheat. Sir Buzzard knows of, and approves my passion.

Lady Flip. Sir Buzzard approves it!

Cheat. He does,—and I cannot live——

Lady Flip. Hold, sir! *(Aside.)* I'm astonish'd.

Cheat. I cannot live without her.

Lady Flip. Without her! without whom?

Cheat. Who but Constance!—divine Constance!

Lady Flip. (Aside.) Though I despise the fellow!—I—I—but why should I be ruffled?

Cheat. She thought I was making love to herself. *(Aside.)*

Lady Flip. And would you have me accessary to the ruin of a young creature?

Cheat. There is no ruin intended;—I have open'd my mind to the lady,—Sir Buzzard is my friend, and I only solicit your interest; I would marry Constance.

Lady Flip. No ruin intended! could a greater curse befal a young creature than to marry you!—who are you, sir?

Cheat. Who am I, madam! a gentleman.

Lady Flip. I don't mean to asperse your birth, sir; but is not your ruling passion play; your principal dependance cards and dice; your most intimate connections jockeys, grooms, game-cocks, and race-horses? I am surprised you could look up to her.

Cheat. My fortune and family entitle me to look up to any woman.

Lady Flip. Then it must be merely to look up; you are, no doubt, one of fortune's favourites, and her favours follow you;—you have large estates in expectancy, and considerable rents in Bath, Wells, Scarborough, Southampton and Margate; nay, more,

you have as many agents as the first landed gentleman in the country.

Cheat. I don't understand this treatment.

Lady Flip. Your connections, manners and conversation would be perfectly agreeable to Constance's turn of mind;—her respect for religion, her morality, philosophy, and knowledge of the belles lettres, would exactly coincide with your studies in the arts and sciences of play.

Cheat. Arts and sciences of play—

Lady Flip. I insinuate nothing injurious to your profession; the respect which professors of play receive in preference to all other professors proves it a profession the most liberal, as well as most profitable. *(ironically.)*

Cheat. She will never forgive the insult of preferring another woman to herself; *(Aside.)* Your tradesmen's bills, madam, are unpaid, your ladyship's mercer and milliner—and people of that class are so importunate and rude;—I do not solicit you to take an active part in my favour; only promise not to be an enemy, and the debt of honour is cancelled.

Lady Flip. You say the debt of honour shall be cancelled. Are you aware that Constance has bestowed her favours on young De Courcy, of York?

Cheat. Yes; and that his passion for play was cooled at the last York races, which obliged him to take a trip to France for the recovery of his finances.

Lady Flip. And his losses she imputes to a conspiracy between you and those friends of yours, who were the ostensible winners, and to whom you introduced him;—I fear you have no chance.

Cheat. Chance!—leave me to that;—I have often won with the odds against me: then she is a beggar, but my passion is disinterested.

Lady Flip. And pray now, how much of the uncle's

debt of honour is to be paid by this parental kindness to the niece?—I see into the scheme,—and here comes the unfortunate sacrifice.

Enter CONSTANCE.

Con. I understand your ladyship desired to speak with me.

Lady Flip. To inform you, my dear, of some engagements; but particular business calls me away for a few minutes, so I leave you to entertain Mr. Cheaterly. [*Exit Lady* FLIPPANT.

Cheat. (*Aside.*) Her modest blush puts even my impudence out of countenance!—your solicitude, madam, to avoid me, so strongly indicates apathy to my addresses, I almost dread the possibility of convincing you I am sincere;—do not turn from me in scorn; I may have some claim upon your gratitude, though no interest in your heart.

Con. Gratitude! Oh! Your absence, sir, I must insist on; I will not, in future, be persecuted by your presumption!

Cheat. I acknowledge my weakness in pursuing the impulse of my passion; reason checks me, but such is the imperious violence of my affection, that even your scorn increases my desires, by making you lovely in the midst of anger, and the blessing I sigh for appears still more valuable, more worthy pursuit, from the distant prospect you give me of the possession.

Con. Prospect, sir!

Cheat. Yes, madam, prospect.

Con. You will be pleased, sir, to withdraw—you are insolent. [*Walks disconcerted.*

Cheat. Insolent! a hard word, madam, to a man who prefers you to every other woman,—I may be bold, madam, but—

Con. I repeat it, you are insolent. [*Walks from him.*

Cheat. I am calm, madam; I know the impedi-

ment to my happiness, young lady, and have spirit to remove it.—Insolent! ha; you prefer a clandestine correspondence with a bankrupt in fame and fortune to the generous addresses of a man, honoured with your uncle's approbation, and independent of the world.

Con. The engagements of my heart—but I will not weep—(*wiping her eyes*)—Sir——you have, with a base and mean cowardice, dared to traduce a generous, unsuspecting youth, whose fortune you have assisted to ruin, but whose honour you can never taint;—a youth who, if present, you would not dare to look on without trembling. (*Going.*)

Enter Sir BUZZARD SAVAGE.

Sir Buz. What's the matter now?

Con. Enquire of that gentleman, sir.

Sir Buz. What a life I lead! my mind kept in a continual fever, you and your aunt are a perpetual ague to me;—her hot fits of levity, and your cool fits of prudery, operate alternately, and I am tortured by you from morning till night.

Con. I must tell you, sir, that since your house cannot afford me protection, I shall leave it; and, though destitute of fortune, I know where to apply for an asylum. [*Exit* CONSTANCE.

Sir Buz. "I know where to apply for an asylum!" —She cannot have a knowledge of our secret, or I would suppose she meant the Chancery; a man must now pay as much attention to his ward, as if she was his child.

Cheat. True, and what adds to the grievance, if a young fellow marries an heiress, he is obliged to settle her fortune on herself, though, perhaps, her person was a secondary object,—I shall never succeed here, Sir Buzzard.

Sir Buz. Pish, why not succeed? a hundred to one but all she has said is pretence,—you know nothing

of women's subtilty; they smile, they frown, they laugh, they weep, they move but to deceive us, and lay a snare in every article of their dress.

Cheat. De Courcy is the object of her choice.

Sir Buz. Why afraid of De Courcy? his friends at York races plucked the poor devil of a pigeon so bare, they scarcely left him feathers to fly into France.

Cheat. I was present;—may I depend on your assistance?

Sir Buz. Is not our bargain concluded?—on the day of your marriage with my niece, you return me my mortgages, the bill of sale upon my horses, and an acquittance of all demands.

Cheat. Depend upon it—I have pledg'd my honour;—assist me, and I will pursue my game, though she keeps me at bay every step.

Sir Buz. Cheaterly, I must look about me; I came down here for the recovery of my health, and am suffering under a precipitate consumption of my purse. Do you think the young clergyman plays fair?

Cheat. You mean Parson Spruce; could you suspect a divine?

Sir Buz. Why, yes; I do suspect your divines in their own hair, and boots: many of them I believe have thrown off morality with their wigs, and kicked away religion with their shoes.

Cheat. But Dr. Spruce has three hundred a year in the church——he won a cool fifty from me.

Sir Buz. A fifty! I lost more to him than would purchase four years of his income.

Cheat. Do you want cash? I can lend you a hundred; here (*gives him a note*) with friends money should be a common commodity.

Sir Buz. Why I lost this note to Parson Spruce last night—he gave me a fifty, and took it.

Cheat. Aye, Oh, I had it from him, he gave it to me for a bill on London.

Sir Buz. Here comes Colonel Staff and old Ordeal yoked together, very naturally, as two asses should be;—I despise them both: the colonel never served abroad, yet he prates as bold as if he had experienced half a dozen foreign campaigns.

Cheat. And is poor and proud.

Sir Buz. Yes, but hopes to mend his fortune by marrying my sister; I wish him success, that they may mutually torment each other.

Cheat. Mark Ordeal, he is not a less extraordinary character than the colonel: the fellow was a foundling, and never knew his parents; but having acquired a fortune by trade, impudently insults his betters, by preaching what he calls generosity.

Sir Buz. O, confound his generosity; he is always setting a bad example with his charities, relieving widows, providing for orphans, and portioning off young maidens: though ignorant as a Hottentot, he has got himself rank'd among the literati, and sets up for a philosopher—the fellow has come into life through as many shapes as an Orkney barnacle; he was first a block, then a worm, and is now a goose.

Enter Colonel STAFF, *and Mr.* ORDEAL.

Col. Ha! ha! ha! I have been accusing Ordeal of avarice, and he denies the charge.

Ord. I do: avarice, though too often an attendant on age, is a vice foreign to my nature; no man can accuse me of accumulating money by unjust means, or of hoarding it when in my possession; whereas avarice is a dropsy of the mind—a disease that irritates and increases by the means used to assuage its thirst.

Col. Have you not refused to lend me a mere trifle, and being rich, is not that a proof of avarice?

Ord. Hear me;—I consider myself an agent,

bound to answer for the distribution of that wealth with which heaven has bless'd my industry—the charge of avarice is more applicable to the spendthrift than the prudent; the spendthrift grasps at every man's property; yet no man is accounted avaricious who conforms to the custom of dissipation; though the spendthrift raises his rents, and starves his tenantry—borrows money and ruins his friend, or runs in debt, and makes bankrupts of his tradesmen, if he drives a carriage, keeps a train of servants, plays, drinks, and plunges into vice, the world will call him a damn'd generous fellow——I speak my mind—that's my way.

Sir Buz. Well, colonel, how goes on your affair with my fantastical sister? She is a jilt, colonel.—I hate a jilt.

Col. She will soon surrender: I have got possession of the counterscarp, and shall shortly set up the standard of matrimony upon the crown of the—

Sir Buz. Horn work—Eh?

Cheat. The widow has a considerable share of the *toujours gai* in her composition.

Sir Buz. Too much to promise constancy; but then you old bachelors have such winning ways—but, colonel, keep a centinel on my sister—time and possession are two dangerous pioneers, the first moulders the cement by degrees, and the other saps the foundation.

Cheat. Then the widow is so frank, dégagé and good natured, she may grant favours from charity and sensibility, which other women would refuse from principle, or the prejudice of education.

Ord. What Mr. Cheaterly has advanced contains profound gravity of judgment: but my Clary shall have no modern education; I have engaged a master to teach her the classics, to manure the soil by cultivating the seeds of virtue;—yes, I will have Clary cultivated, for she is innocence itself: free from the

bias of example, she is guided only by the impulse of pure nature.

Cheat. A young lady could not have a more dangerous preceptor; the impulse of pure nature will produce every evil that can arise from the politest education.

Ord. I am convinc'd she is delicate as the ermine, which would die to preserve the snowy whiteness of its fur.

Col. Well said, my old friend, amorous as May, though grey as December.

Ord. Grey! Nay, let me tell you, colonel, though snow has fallen upon the mountain, there is sunshine in the valley—Clara is an Aurora Borealis, a blaze in the regions of frigidity.

Sir Buz. Ordeal, seriously, now, are you going to marry this ward of yours for love?

Ord. Seriously, I love the girl as I love my life; but if I did not, having no relations nor friends to whom I owe any obligation, I am determined to make her my heir.

Sir Buz. And no doubt she will bring you an heir in return, and then bury you.

Ord. Bury me!—Granted: when I sleep peaceable under the green turf, let her marry some honest young fellow, and their children shall bear my name.

Cheat. A good way this to raise a family without trouble.

Ord. Family, I understand your sneer: I was a foundling it is true, and cannot boast ancestry; yet I have a heart susceptible of the tender feelings and sweet solicitudes of humanity. Though I cannot claim relations of particular descriptions, I know Adam and Eve were our primitive parents, therefore consider the world one common family, and hold myself bound to all mankind by ties of fraternal love.

Sir Buz. And your family kindness is not con-

fined to your brothers, but extends to your sisters too.

Ord. Clara's father was my friend; we serv'd our apprenticeship together, set up in the same branch of trade, he failed, and died poor, but I prospered—he was a worthy soul, and I never speak of him without tears. (*Weeps.*)

Cheat. Ah! very good, Sir Buzzard; because the father was his juvenile friend, he would marry the daughter in his old age.

Sir Buz. A pretty excuse for a vicious appetite.

Col. Hear, hear!

Ord. Clara's father, when on his death-bed, bequeathed her to me as a legacy; it was a bequest of confidence, and I esteem it more than if it had been a million: he bequeathed her to me an infant, without a mother, without relations, without friends, without fortune.—Now, though rich in the liberal gifts of nature, who hath endowed her with an exuberant hand, yet being poor in worldly substance, she hath but few attractions for a husband; the knight errants of these days are Argonauts—this is the golden age, and every thing is bought and sold.

Sir Buz. Spoke in the true spirit of commerce, my old merchant.

Ord. Let me tell you, Sir Knight, the spirit of commerce is the best spirit in the nation; we merchants live by barter and sale it is true, but take this with you, sir, probity is our principle, and our character nice as a lady's.

Sir Buz. Here comes my moiety of mortality—here comes the origin of two thirds of my complaints, with my widow'd sister, the colonel's tormentor that is to be—see, they smile at some mischief in embryo—Ah, candied ginger, sugar on the outside, fire within, sweet on the palate, biting on the tongue. Ordeal, keep a strict eye upon pure nature; the aloe is most bitter when green. (*Going.*)

Cheat. Nay, stay, Sir Buzzard.

Sir Buz. Stay, and my wife coming! Excuse me, I avoid her as I would an epidemic complaint. [*Exit.*

Enter Lady FLIPPANT SAVAGE *and Widow* VOLATILE.

Wid. Are you here, colonel? I follow you as the little bird does the cuckoo—Mr. Ordeal, your most obedient: how is pretty Clara, and when are we to call her Mrs. Ordeal?—You rear her quite a domestic animal, she is never seen abroad.

Lady Flip. Nor at home, sister, not even at the windows.

Cheat. He fears the sun would spoil her complexion.

Ord. She hath indeed a lovely complexion, glowing and bright as the Tyrian dye, not a modern local blush, that hides shame instead of discovering it; but ruddy health moving in varied tints—the lily and the rose vying for pre-eminence on her cheek!—O she is pure nature!

Wid. But when introduced to life those roses will blow, those lilies will fade.

Ord. She shall never get into any life, but where they may blow and fade naturally—her real face shall never be concealed under a counterfeit; some ladies coin complexions, and should be punished for high treason in defacing beauty.

Cheat. Bravo, old Ordeal! bravo!

Ord. I reprobate imposition of charms! a reverend bishop declared to me he was married two years before he saw his wife's face, and that was by accident.

Lady Flip. I am astonished a gentleman of your age can be so scandalous, so malicious; but it is the nature of wasps to retain their buz after they have lost their sting.

Wid. Our gaiety provokes their spleen; these

ancient gentlemen rail at women for speaking scandal, yet resort in groupes to every place of public entertainment, ogling with their telescope eyes to discover blemishes on beautiful objects—now here's a piece of antiquity! (*turning Ordeal round.*)

Ord. I have not pretended to juvenility since the crow's feet appeared near my eyes: nay, don't bite your lips, widow; lines will appear in the skin after thirty, and are the harbingers to wrinkles.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. The chocolate is ready, my lady.

[*Exit Servant.*

Lady Flip. Sister, let us in—Mr. Cheaterly—

Cheat. I attend your ladyship.

Ord. Can I pay my respects to Constance, my old friend's daughter?

Lady Flip. You will probably find her in the study—poor Constance takes the humbleness of her situation too much to heart.

[*Exit Lady* FLIP. CHEAT. *and Widow.*

Ord. Colonel, I knew the father of Constance intimately, a stout fellow, and served his country long and well—he served abroad—

Col. Hem!

Ord. Strict honour was his principle—but alas, he experienced that was not the medium to promotion—so finding carpet soldiers like you promoted over his head, he went to India.

Col. This widow of mine, Ordeal, hath a prolific flow of wit and spirits.

Ord. Yes, and egad I thought she struck you dumb—she has a prolific tongue too, sharp as the arrow of a Bornean Indian, and tipp'd with poison; your union with her will be happy—perfectly happy—though I recollect she compared you to a cuckoo, a bird of omen; yes, a cuckoo is a very ominous bird—pray, colonel, is the widow skilled in augury?

Col. Damn your cuckoo! but your speaking of augury reminds me of a circumstance at the siege of Prague—a flock of rooks——

Ord. I must go pay my compliments to Constance.

Col. At the siege of Prague—when the Prussian grenadiers advanced. (*Holds Ordeal.*)

Ord. Were you at the siege, colonel?

Col. My regiment was there—I have served my country.

Ord. Oh, yes, you have done great service to your country—at home—by censuring those who have fought for her abroad. [*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Chamber.*

Lady FLIPPANT *and* WELFORD, *seated.*

Lady Flip. Sir, I must say you presume too far.

Wel. I saw your ladyship and admired, and if that be presumption, who is free from it? Admiration naturally produced a more tender emotion—I communicated my feelings to Mrs. Muslin;—Mrs. Muslin reported them to your ladyship, and your ladyship, with a mind liberal as your person is elegant, permits me to throw myself at your feet.

Lady Flip. You have misconstrued the liberty I allowed—my house is always open to persons of fashion, and as a visitor only I expected you.

[*Rises.*

Wel. Nay, madam, your privy counsellor informed me I should be admitted into the interior cabinet,

and your principal lady in waiting introduced me in form accordingly.

Lady Flip. And shall I call her now, sir, to shew you the way back? [*Aside.*] Pleasant impudent fellow!

Wel. You are not so cruel—I see pardon beaming from your eye, and frolic smiling on your cheek.

Lady Flip. And should I pardon from that instant, the servile suppliant, now at my feet, would lose all sense of obligation, and from the mistress's slave aspire to be her tyrant.

Wel. I neither desire to be slave or tyrant, but to love upon equal terms—you consent—I read it in your eyes—and I am secret as the grave.

Lady Flip. Secret you may be, but it is not the mere colour of reputation can protect a woman's honour.—I might, perhaps, carry on an intrigue with secrecy, but my mind—

Wel. Upon my soul I have no design upon your ladyship's mind: my heart is captivated; and if I did not totally misunderstand my good friend, and your ladyship's very good friend, Mrs. Muslin, a certain person (whom modesty will not permit me to name) is not totally indifferent in your opinion. (*Bowing*).

Sir Buz. [*within.*] Grace, where is your lady?

Lady Flip. Sir Buzzard's voice!

Grace. [*within.*] My lady, sir!

Sir Buz. Yes, your lady, ma'am.

Grace. [*Speaking very loud.*] She is in her own room, sir, but I believe not yet dress'd—I'll let her know you want her, sir.

Enter GRACE.

Grace. As I hope to be saved, here is my master, and in one of his gruff humours, quite in a tantarum—the gentleman cannot go out that way—follow me.

Lady Flip. Into the next room—make haste—
[*Pushing* WELFORD.

Wel. I go, perhaps, into the interior cabinet—This alarm, I trust, will convince your ladyship, that in love, as in war, delays are dangerous—Go on, Mrs. Grace. [*Exeunt* WELFORD *and* GRACE.

Enter Sir BUZZARD. [*He sits.*]

Sir Buz. What an infernal life I lead!

Lady Flip. What has rais'd the storm now?

Sir Buz. Why ask!—you know I am married—and married to you—I am my own master, and hate impertinent questions—I have lost my money—I am glad of it.—Oh! I wish I had never married.

Lady Flip. [*sighs.*] And I, with all my heart.

Sir Buz. Yet you leaped at my offer—you were glad to snatch at me—

Lady Flip. Who I? I was seduced into the match!—Have I not brought reputation to your house, sir?

Sir Buz. Reputation to my house!—you have turned my house topsy turvy, inside out; you have irritated me into a complication of complaints, and reduced my fortune to galloping decay—have fretted me down to a mere skeleton.

Lady Flip. Sir, some respect is due to my birth; —I am daughter to a nobleman, and till honoured with my hand, your family could not boast a drop of blood in their veins.

Sir Buz. No blood in their veins! I, indeed, have lost both flesh and blood; no blood in my veins!—Have I not lent your brother money—your uncle money—your cousins money!—which of your honourable or right honourable relations are out of my debt?——If I had no blood in my veins, how the devil have you and yours bled me so plentifully?

Lady Flip. I despise your meanness—

Sir Buz. Your family are leeches—I could never shake them off.

Lady Flip. Sir, your connexion with me was an honour, which, with all your land and wealth, you had no right to expect. What was your family before your union with me?

Sir Buz. Men and women.

Lady Flip. Could they boast antiquity?

Sir Buz. Yes, my grandfather lived to ninety—my father to eighty-six.

Lady Flip. You married me———

Sir Buz. To perpetuate my family—are you satisfied?

Lady Flip. No, I am not satisfied.

Sir Buz. I know it, I know it.—I know it.

Lady Flip. My ancestors can be traced to the Normans—the Danes—the Saxons.

Sir Buz. Which only proves you have sprung from pirates and invaders; but what is it to me if you were related to the Picts, the Scots, or the Romans? —I am a Savage!

Lady Flip. Yes, you are a savage indeed—

Sir Buz. And the Savages, let me tell you, are the oldest and purest blood in the country.

Lady Flip. (*Aside.*) How shall I get rid of him?—Sir Buzzard, you don't intend to stay here, I hope?

Sir Buz. You hope so, do you?—I am glad of that, then here I shall have a comfortable nap. (*Sits down and composes himself.*)

Lady Flip. (*aside.*) I'll raise the spirit of contradiction to send him off (*draws a chair and sits by him*). Now that is kind, thanks for your company, and I'll read, or sing a lullaby to compose you; shall I kiss you?—come now, smile, my dear. (*Takes off his hat.*)

Sir Buz. I hate smiling, smiling is the cunning covering of deceit; (*rising*) and kissing——am I in a habit of constitution for kissing?

Lady Flip. Am not I your wife?

Sir Buz. I feel you are—do not roll your basilisks—they have lost their fascinating powers.

Lady Flip. But you shall not go—

Sir Buz. Not go!—I am master of my own house!

Lady Flip. Then I will be mistress of my time;—I may find a companion.

Sir Buz. With all my heart—a woman who would keep her husband at home is worse than a corn on his foot, there is no stirring at ease for her!—O that mine were cut off!

Lady Flip. You will go before me though; I shall wear weeds for my love—your face looks this instant pale as marble, and I can see "Here lieth Sir Buzzard Savage," written on your forehead.

Sir Buz. I am ill, it is true.

Lady Flip. Ill! you have a mortal blackness under your eyes.

Sir Buz. Eh! What!

Lady Flip. Do not stare so—it alarms me!

Sir Buz. My head swims!——I feel a palpitation here, just upon my temple.

Lady Flip. A dangerous symptom.

Sir Buz. I know it, and you are glad of it. Oh, Lord! I shall presently be enrolled on death's list of Bath patients, who die where they come to live for the recovery of their health. [*Exit.*

Lady Flip. Now to deliver my poor distressed swain from confinement. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Another Apartment.*

WELFORD *and* GRACE *discovered.*

Wel. Nay, my nonpareil—my sweetest, dearest of all girls, you may believe every word I say.

[*Lady* FLIPPANT *appears listening at a door in the scene.*

I have lov'd you——

Grace. Love me!—dear sir!—Well, whether you speak truth or no, I like to hear you say so—yet, I fear you are false-hearted; it was my lady you came to visit.

Wel. Your lady! no, no, child, you were the object, and I got myself introduced to the lady, that I might with more ease become intimate with the maid.

Grace. Cannot believe that—my lady is much handsomer than I—What a fine complexion!

Wel. Mere rouge!

Grace. White teeth!

Wel. For which she's obliged to the dentist—

Grace. Charming hair!

Wel. All false.

Grace. Then, what polite conversation!

Wel. Psha, child, she has not the native bloom of your cheeks, the nectarine of your lip, the pearl of your teeth, the natural curl of your tresses, nor the wit of your imagination.

Grace. (*Aside.*) How I likes to hear him praise me and abuse my lady!—And you really love me?

Wel. Most devoutly—could we not retire to a more private chamber? (*Shews a purse.*)

Grace. Swear you'll not be false-hearted.

Wel. By Jupiter, Venus, Cupid, and all the gods and goddesses, never. (*Shakes the purse.*)

Grace. Then hear me swear (*lays her hand upon the purse*) by this purse (*takes it*) I like you.

Wel. Take it, my girl—take it.

Grace. And by this ring, I'll—(*lays her hand on his ring.*)

Wel. My dear, don't swear so often—but kiss me, hussy—I have a secret to tell you.

Grace. A secret! but may not that secret speak for itself hereafter, and discover all?

[*Lady* FLIPPANT *comes forward.*

Dear ma'am, you can't think how the gentleman has been praising your ladyship's complexion, teeth, hair, and I don't know what.

Wel. Yes, I was praising your ladyship's—I—I—I—don't know what.

Lady Flip. There's no impediment now, sir, to your retiring, and I request you will instantly withdraw.

Wel. For the present I submit to your rigid and peremptory sentence;—it is my way never to deny or palliate my faults. When I travel in pursuit of pleasure, I always take a view of such beautiful seats as lie before me, and for the life of me, I could not help casting an eye on this little snug box, which lay so convenient to your ladyship's mansion-house.

[*Exit* WELFORD.

Grace. I hope your ladyship will excuse me;—I thought I was doing no harm,—I thought your ladyship dismissed the gentleman, and your ladyship knows we chambermaids have the same claim to our ladies cast lovers, as to their cast clothes.

[*Exit* GRACE.

Lady Flip. Order chairs, and tell my sister I'll attend her to ——Devil take the fellow, yet I admire him for his impudence. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—ORDEAL'S *Study.*

Enter NICHOLAS *and* DOUGLAS, *disguised in a shabby Highland Dress.*

Nich. And so you were recommended by old Corderius, the schoolmaster, to teach our young lady the Latin lingo?

Doug. Yes; to instruct her in the reediments of the dead languages.

Nich. Dead languages! do you mean the languages spoken in the other world? for ecod she can chatter glibby enough in the living tongue.

Doug. I am to instruct her, man, in Greek and Latin.

Nich. Greek and Latin! will not that teach her strology and conjuration?

Enter ORDEAL.

Here, sir, is Mr.a—a—What's your name, Scotchey?

Doug. Alexander M'Classic.

Nich. He's Mr. M'Classic, come from Mr. Corderius to learn Miss Clary the dead languages, which he has got alive at his tongue's end.

Doug. Here, sir, are my credentials.

[*Gives a letter.*

Ord. My friend Corderius gives you an excellent character, young man, for honesty, and literary abilities, and you may begin with your pupil when you please.

Nich. He has began with her already.

Ord. You are perfect master of the classics, I presume.

Doug. My father keept an academy, where I first acquired the roodiments, and after I matriculated at Aberdeen; there I made an intimate acquantance with the philosophers, Christian, and Heathen,—the logicians, mathematicians, astronomers, navigators, botanists, chemists, and aw the tribe of nateral philosophers.

Nich. What a number of scholars are in Aberdeen!

Ord. Be silent, fool.

Doug. As to the classics, I am maister of Homer, Xenophon, Sophocles, Seneca, Virgil, Ovid, Terence, Sallust, Livy and Horace.

Nich. Have you learned all those gentlemen?

Ord. Silence, you inquisitive puppy.

Doug. I teach them aw, and will make the young lady mistress of them aw.

Nich. Mistress of them all! Ecod she'll never remember half of her servants' names! but o' tag, rag, and bobtail; how comes it that with all those scholars you've taught, you go so poorly? Ecod your clothes are all in jeopardy. He! he! he!

Ord. Silence. Go you, sirrah, and call miss Clara.

Nich. I go—I go—I go—I go—I go—let me see—he teaches musicians, magicians, and physicians—and he'll teach her conjuration and star-gazing—and—mum. [*Exit* NICHOLAS.

Doug. You are, I presume, sir, a scholar.

Ord. I never deny my ignorance—it is my misfortune, and a man should only be ashamed of his faults,—I do not understand a word of any language but my native tongue, except a few phrases I have picked up,—but I have read most English authors; born in poverty, I was debarred the benefit of a liberal education.—I am candid—that's my way.

Doug. This is a common case.

Ord. No doubt one half of the literati are unlettered, and, like light or Birmingham guineas, pass for more than they are worth.

Doug. You intend to mary the lady yourself?

Ord. Yes.

Doug. And you have secluded her frae company, aw that was judicious—be cautious what men you introduce to her.

Ord. Yes; and women too.

Doug. That's right,—recreations which prudence prohibits at home, and decency denies the exercise of in public, may easily be enjoyed at the preevate house of a confidential friend.

Ord. You are right; there are many obliging, con-

venient, liberal-hearted, female beauty brokers, who support elegance and expence by trading in a contraband commerce of the sexes.

Enter CLARA *and* NICHOLAS.

Well, my girl,—your tutor has given you a lesson, I understand.

Cla. Yes, sir. (*Loud knocking.*)

Ord. Who the devil is at the door?—I believe they have got a battering-ram, and are going to storm us after the manner of the Greeks and Romans.

[*Exit* NICHOLAS.

Enter NICHOLAS.

Nich. Such silks, and rustlings!

Ord. What's the matter?

Nich. There are cork rumps—hoops and high heels in the house.

Ord. Who knocks at the door?

Nich. They are covered with paint, patches and pomatum.

Ord. Who knock'd at the door?

Nich. False hair, curls and perfumes!—don't blame me, they came upon me unawares; I push'd, and they push'd,—but they push'd harder, and overturned me.

Ord. Who overturned you?

Nich. They are full of flirtation, and giggling, and bedizened with gauze and ribbands; Lady Savage and her sister, with their long tails sweeping behind.

Ord. Lady Savage and her sister! Lady Devil and her imp!—Where are they?

Nich. Running all over the house—up stairs and down stairs, to and fro,—in and out—backwards and forwards—round about—here and there, and every where.

Ord. I am not at home,—there is no body at home—we are all out—I'll retire to my closet; you will

step with me, Mr. M'Classic, and do you, my lamb, lock yourself up to avoid 'em.

[*Exit* ORDEAL *and* DOUGLAS.

Nich. He, he, he,—here is a bluster.—Ecod we shall have rare sport.

Enter Lady FLIPPANT *and the Widow.*

Lady Flip. Where, my dear, in such haste?

Cla. Indeed I cannot stay—must I not go, Nicholas?

Nich. Yes, you must go,—go—go—go.

[*Pushing her out.*

Wid. Be not alarmed, miss, we are Mr. Ordeal's intimate friends.

Nich. Yes, miss, they are our intimate friends.

Lady Flip. Come to visit you, my dear.

Nich. Yes; they are come to visit us,—my dear.

Wid. Where is Sir Ordeal?

Nich. Out—out—out (*Points to the closet.*) we shall have swinging fun. (*Aside.*)

Cla. Ladies, farewell. (*Going.*)

Wid. Fie, my dear,—it would be impolite to leave company.

Nich. Miss Clary,—Manners makes the man—we are teaching her the Latin lingo.

Wid. Are you very happy, my dear, on being on the verge of matrimony?

Nich. Speak, my dear. (*Lady* FLIPPANT, *and the Widow, stand on each side of* CLARA.)

Cla. I cannot say I'm very happy; nor I cannot say I am displeased: I do not wish to be married, nor have I any objection to a husband——Heigho!

Lady Flip. But to confess the truth, you have no desire to marry Mr. Ordeal, he is such an old fellow; though if addressed by a handsome, wealthy, good natured youth, you'd—Heigho!

Cla. Do not speak disrespectfully of my guardian—he is very kind to me.

Lady Flip. I approve your prudence in preferring an old lover to a young one; after marriage you will no longer be confined like an infant;—then you will enjoy such pleasure in making his money fly, and in seeing him approach the grave.

Wid. But for fear he should live too long, be sure you get him a physician.

Nich. A physician! O, death!

Cla. My guardian has taught me how a married lady ought to conduct herself.

Wid. Let us hear, my dear pretty creature.

Cla. I have it by heart: he has taught me, that all young men are cunning and deceitful, and that I must never listen to or believe their flattering tongues; that a man and his wife are one person, and should act as if inspired by one soul!—that a wife should not complain of her husband to her most intimate friends, nor form any connections without his approbation.

Nich. There's instruction for you; you see we take care of her soul.

Cla. Moreover, he has taught me, that in private a wife should receive no company without her husband's knowledge, and in public should not think herself protected but by his presence; that she should obey him in all things, and place her highest delight in making him happy.

Lady Flip. These were the duties of a wife in the last century,—but we will instruct you in the duties of a wife, who would cut a figure in the polite circles of the present day.—Sister, begin.

Wid. Must consider matrimony a means to increase liberty, and defy scandal.

Lady Flip. Must retain your favourite cicisbeo, confidante, maid servant and footman.

Nich. That will be, I.

Wid. See whom you please, where you please, and when you please.

Cla. That must be very pleasant!—Go on.

Lady Flip. Must be mistress of your own hours,—turn day into night, and night into day.——

Wid. Keep a separate purse, a separate carriage, and a separate bed.

Lady Flip. Never attend to œconomy, but sink, play, and squander your money, to the last shilling, and stretch your husband's credit to the utmost.

Nich. Here is work cut out for mantua-makers and milliners.

Wid. You must always dissimulate in conversation with your husband, and when you cannot deceive you must insist—if he opposes your will, rant, and laugh at him.

Nich. Ha, ha, ha!

Lady Flip. And if these fail, accuse him of cruelty, sigh, sob, weep, scream out, and fall into fits.

Enter ORDEAL *and* DOUGLAS.

Ord. I can contain no longer!—out of my house!—

Lady Flip. Shame! Shame! What, listening to the private conversation of ladies?

Ord. Private conversation! open, abominable instruction,—how can you answer to your conscience, for attempting to poison a young creature's morals! —retire, retire, my lamb.—

Cla. Farewell, ladies.

Wid. Adieu, pretty Clara.

Lady Flip. And remember our instructions.

[*Exit* CLARA.

Ord. Instructions!——downright libertine principles!—you may laugh, ladies,—you may laugh. Ha, ha, ha!

Lady Flip. } Ha, ha, ha!
Wid. }

Doug. Perhaps the ladies think their beauty sufficient excuse for their levity,—but ah, they are wrong—naething can atone for want of delicacy,

without which there can be nae charms in the face, nae elegance in the person.

Enter Colonel STAFF.

Col. Ordeal, your most obedient—call'd at your ladyship's house, and Miss Constance inform'd me you were on a visit here.

Wid. We came to see Mr. Ordeal's pure nature, and he has affronted us!

Col. Affronted!—impossible!

Doug. Haud your tongue, lady, haud your tongue! —levity degrades a woman, however her name may be elevated by birth, teetle, or fortin.

Col. Who are you?

Doug. A man.

Nich. Yes, and a scholar ecod!

Ord. (*To the women.*) Out of my house!

Lady Flip. I'll prophecy for your comfort, if you marry Clara she'll soon draw a comparison between your winter frown and the summer smiles of a pretty fellow.

Ord. I despise your prophecy—Oracles have long since ceased; when they existed the devil spoke through them, which may be your ladyship's case.

Col. Ordeal, take care; I wear a sword.

Doug. I weer a sword.

Col. Do you daar echo my words?

Doug. Do you daar echo my words?

Nich. Knock out his teeth with one of your hard ones.

Col. Rascal! (*raises his hand.*)

Doug. Rascal! hear first, and strike after:—you appear an officer, but I am convinced you are nae soldier; touch but a hair o' my heed wi' your hand, and the dee'l gang away wi' my soul, gin I dinna split you through the crown.

Nich. Sir, sir, shall I bring him the old broad sword?

Col. There was just such a fellow as this at the Havannah——

Ord. There were several such fellows at the Havannah, and such fellows only could have beaten the brave fellows who defended it,—were you there?

Col. My regiment did service there—and if it had not been for a damn'd ague,—but no matter,—I overlook this fellow's insolence,—but Mr. Ordeal, you have been too severe on the ladies.

Doug. Too severe on the ladies—I am your echo again—zounds, do you take the man for a Shrove-tide cock, set up to receive blows without returning them?

Wid. Let's go; we are not likely to receive protection from the colonel.

Doug. I ken, madam, what you are.

Wid. Stand off, fellow——

Col. These are ladies of honour.——

Doug. Their honour, like your courage, is in their own possession; but remember the character of both is in the opinion of others.

Wid. Do you hear the fellow?

Col. He's mad, and not worth notice.

Lady Flip. Were I Clara, I should prefer a young Indian, though sure of being his widow, and burning with him in a month, to living with you for an age.

Col. Ordeal, you shall answer this—but——

Doug. But what dare you say?

Col. Say—I say—my immediate duty is to attend the ladies.

[*Exit Colonel, Lady* FLIPPANT *and Widow.*

Ord. My brave Caledonian! (*shakes hands.*) But here, here, step out and get yourself new rigged.—(*Gives* DOUGLAS *money.*)

Nich. Yes, he is out of feather, and wants pluming.

Ord. But you, you sirrah, if ever you let those women enter my doors again, out you go—Oh, what a fierce beast, and a perilous enemy to the commonwealth, is a wicked woman! [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter Lady FLIPPANT SAVAGE *and* GRACE.

Grace. Shall I introduce the gentleman, my lady?

Lady Flip. Yes,—no,—yes, Grace.

Grace. I like the gentleman, because he likes your ladyship,—and that shews him a man of taste—I go.—(*Going.*)

Lady Flip. Stay, Grace,—let me consider, this interview may be attended with all the ill consequences of an illicit correspondence.—What are you musing on, Grace?

Grace. I am thinking how very ugly Sir Buzzard is in comparison with your ladyship's lover.——

Lady Flip. Sir Buzzard's plainness, Grace, is not his worst fault,—it is his peevish asperity of disposition renders him odious to me.—Grace, I will not see this gentleman, it will endanger my reputation.——

Grace. Nay, my lady, but consider, *my* reputation, my *honour* is pledged,—he is a delightful creature.—Then consider what an airy, nice dressed gentleman he is—and consider, Sir Buzzard wears flannel under-waistcoats, and swan-skin stockings.

Lady Flip. Can I ever again face Sir Buzzard?

Grace. If I was your ladyship, I would not face my lover too suddenly,—no, I would recline upon the sopha,—(*sits*) lost in thinking,—so,—with my

fan shading my face thus, and every thing about me dégagée.——

Lady Flip. You say he waits.——

Grace. Or when the dear man approached, turn short—strike him with a full flash of my charms, and scream out. Ah!—(*Screams and starts up.*)

Lady Flip. Are you mad, girl?

Grace. A thousand pardons, my lady, but protest I am beside myself. [*Exit* GRACE.

Lady Flip. There is no retracting, and I think I *will* take him by surprise.—I'll keep up the appearance of resentment, and have the satisfaction of hearing him humbly plead for pardon.—(*Sits, with her back to the door.*)

Enter GRACE, *and* WELFORD *full dressed.*

Grace. Now you must acknowledge I am your friend.

Wel. My sweet girl, I do acknowledge it.—
[*Exit* GRACE.
A fine figure! (*taps Lady* FLIPPANT *on the shoulder,—she starts.*) Madam——

Lady Flip. Heaven defend me!

Wel. Not from an ardent lover!——

Lady Flip. (*Aside.*) I cannot scold the fellow, he looks so pleasant!—Pray, sir, by what warrant do you come here?

Wel. I understand from Mrs. Muslin, by warrant from your own lips,—but the warrant is incomplete till your ladyship has affix'd the privy seal to it. (*Offers to kiss her.*)

Lady Flip. A married woman can grant nothing without the consent of her husband.

Wel. Well thought on; but I do not come unprepared: man and wife are one person, and when a married lady gives me reason to think a tête-à-tête would not be disagreeable, I always take care to bring my authority along with me.

Sir Buz. A good looking fellow;—but stand off;—he is enough to suffocate a man with perfume! What's your name, Civet Cat?

Wel. [*In a strong brogue.*] What's my name? I was christen'd Patrick, your honour.

Sir Buz. An Irishman!—eh!—heaven knows we had blunders enough in the family before.—[*Looking on the box*]—this is the wrong box.

[*Exit Sir* BUZZARD *into the closet.*

Grace. Yes, we have all got into the wrong box. [*Aside.*]

Wel. When next we meet— [*Exit.*

Grace. Nothing could be more lucky, my lady,—the new livery that came home for your last footman, George, lay in the bottom of my master's wardrobe. I must see him safe out—

Lady Flip. This is too mortifying, it hurts my pride—had I met a man of a generous disposition—but here comes my torment, and reflection flies.

Enter Sir BUZZARD *with* WELFORD'S *Clothes.*

Sir Buz. I have found more than I sought for, Lady Flippant;—who am I to thank for this addition to my wardrobe?

Lady Flip. These clothes!—you mean these clothes!—he, he, he,—they are really very pretty clothes—you like them, my dear?

Sir Buz. No, I don't like them, my dear; and who the devil did they come from, my dear? and to whom do they belong, my dear?

Lady Flip. Elegant manufacture!—nothing like it made in England.

Sir Buz. Where did they come from?

Lady Flip. Paris.

Sir Buz. Who owns them?

Lady Flip. They are your clothes, my love!——

Sir Buz. Mine! Did you ever see me wear such frippery?

Lady Flip. Yes, yours positively; but I did not intend you should have seen them—they were smuggled.

Sir Buz. Smuggled!

Lady Flip. Yes, smuggled from Paris, by my milliner, and sent here for the purpose of ornamenting you, my sweet love!—

Sir Buz. Sweet love!—now that's fulsome—yet thou art my sweet love!

Lady Flip. Am I?—[*Smiling.*]

Sir Buz. Yes, like an apothecary's dose,—my bitter sweet.—

Lady Flip. How ill-natur'd!—but no matter, you shall wear these clothes at the ball this evening.

Sir Buz. I will not.

Lady Flip. You shall.

Sir Buz. Damn me if I do.

Lady Flip. Very well, sir, then I'll send 'em back.

Sir Buz. They shall not be sent back, I begin to like them,—a good colour, and not too gaudy.—I'll keep them.

Lady Flip. Keep them!

Sir Buz. Yes, and wear them.

Lady Flip. Wear them,—where?

Sir Buz. At the ball this evening.—

Lady Flip. I fear you will take cold.

Sir Buz. You wish I should take cold, but I will not take cold,—and I will wear the clothes; you lay out a revenue on your back, and I will, at least for this once, follow your example.—I'll keep the clothes, and go to the ball in them this evening.

Lady Flip. [*Aside.*] The smuggled clothes are fairly forfeited.

Enter GRACE.

Grace. Dinner, my lady!—[*Seeing the clothes.*] Bless me!

Lady Flip. [*Apart.*] Silence, all is well.—Sir

Buzzard you see found the clothes I ordered Mrs. Muslin to procure him from Paris.

Grace. Well, I am sure, sir, my lady has fitted you nicely, and I admire her taste, that I do; but will you wear them, sir?

Sir Buz. Yes, wear them, sir!

Grace. Not till after dinner, sir.

Sir Buz. Directly, Mrs. Prate,—I will surprise the company in them:—let dinner be kept back.

[*Exit Sir* BUZZARD *with the clothes.*

Grace. It was good luck he did not find the gentleman's sword—yet little matter if he had, for intriguing with an incumbrance about him; but how shall I get him away?

Lady Flip. Poor soul! he must have patience—contrive to convey him through the garden, to a chair; he may pretend he is a servant taken ill, which will blind suspicion. [*Exit Lady* FLIPPANT.

Grace. Well thought on,—my lady's no fool, but she must be a great fool indeed who could not make a fool of a husband. [*Exit* GRACE.

SCENE II.—ORDEAL'S *House.*

Enter NICHOLAS *and* CLARA.

Nich. He, he, he, lack a daisy, Miss Clara—the Scotchman looks gaily in his new clothes,—he is a brave youth,—what a leg [*looks at his leg*]—but I have got more of the calf.

Cla. Yes, a good deal more calf, Nicholas;—but what can be the reason that while he's teaching me, he sighs as piteously as if in pain,—it goes to my heart to hear him without being able to give him ease.

Nich. Why—why—ecod now, Miss Clary, when you speak to me, it makes me sigh, and gives me the heart-burn.

Cla. What would you have me do, good Nicholas?

Nich. What would I have you do? I'll tell you—ecod I cannot—but I'll tell you what the Scotchman ought to do—he,—he ought—

Cla. What!

Nich. Ecod, he ought to,—to—sugar and honey! —what red lips you have!

Cla. What ought he to do?—

Nich. What ought he to do!—why he ought to—how old are you?

Cla. Do not tantalize me, Nicholas.

Nich. Well, I will tell you, he ought to—bless my eyes, what a fine face she has!—he ought to—he ought to—what pretty buckles yours are!—he ought to,—well, shake hands, I will tell you [*takes her hand*] soft as satin,—he ought to—ecod, I should like to do it.

Cla. Do what?

Nich. I mean no offence—but he ought to—[*kisses his hand*] that's what he ought—

Cla. Oh, shame, Nicholas,—shame.

Nich. What shame!—listen to me,—and I won't go behind the bush with you—my master is a fool, and thinks nobody knows any thing but himself—Now, when I see a young man and a young lady together,—and hear them sigh, and see them ogle—why, I sigh myself, and I—I—ecod, I know what's what.

Cla. And what is it you know, Nicholas?

Nich. That the Scotch scholard loves you, and that you like the Scotch scholard—I'ze been in love, and I'ze never think of it, but—Oh, but I can not tell you how it disturbs me—[*Whistles.*]

Cla. And I am disturbed too—heigh ho!

SONG.

What wakes this new pain in my breast?
This sense that lay dormant before?
Lie still, busy flutt'rer, and rest,
The peace of my bosom restore.
What wakes, &c.

Why trickles in silence the tear,
This sighing—ah! what does it mean?
This mixture of hope and of fear,
Where once all was mild and serene.—
What wakes, &c.

Some pleasingly anxious alarm
Now warms and then freezes my heart;
Some soft irresistible charm
Alternate gives pleasure and smart.
What wakes, &c.

Enter ORDEAL *and* DOUGLAS, *in a neat Scotch Dress.*

Ord. Clara, your tutor tells me, you make an astonishing progress in your grammar, and I am to hear you speak a lesson:—bring chairs, Nicholas. [*They sit.*]

Doug. Ha you got your grammar, lady?

Cla. Yes, sir, I have been studying my last lesson. [*Takes a grammar from her pocket.*]

Doug. Be seated, lady. [*They sit.*]

Ord. Modest creature!—how the blush mantles on her cheek!—dón't be ashamed, Clary—Mac Classic [*takes* DOUGLAS *aside*] what a subject for speculation—she is an orange tree, possessing at once the sprightly verdure of the spring, the sweet blossom of the summer, and the ripe fruit of autumn. It revives me to look on her.

Nich. It revives us to look on you.—

Ord. What think you of her eyes?—they shoot arrows of desire into the heart, but on her lips lies an honied salve to heal the wound.

Doug. [*Agitated.*] Will you hear her repeat a lesson?

Ord. See her mouth, a door of coral, opening to a colonnade of pearl.

Nich. Then her bosom, your honour.

Ord. Where the devil is the fellow going? [*Shakes him.*]

Doug. [*Aside.*] My spirits are so agitated, I shall betray myself.

Ord. Come, my lamb—begin.—There is a mild creature, wax of my own fashioning, and I have moulded her into the very temper of my affections.—

Nich. She can give you Latin for every thing about you.

Ord. Restrain your tongue, sirrah. Go on with your lesson, sweetest, and never mind this fellow.

Cla. [*Tenderly.*] Amo, I love, [*looks at* DOUGLAS] amas, thou lovest, [*looks at* ORDEAL] amat, he loves!

Doug. [*Sighs.*] Oh!

Cla. Amamus, we love. Oh! [*Sighs.*]

Nich. He, he, he, amo—I love!

Ord. Silence, rascal!—but, Mac Classic, are the first lessons in Lilly's grammar upon love?

Doug. Aw grammars begin wi' it, sir—because love is the primœval principle of nature.

Nich. He, he, he!

Ord. Out of the room, you scoundrel!

Nich. I go, zir. Amo, I love, amo, you love, amo, he loves, amo, we love,—he, he, he!

[*Exit* NICHOLAS.

Doug. Shall we proceed, sir?

Ord. If you please.

Re-enter NICHOLAS.

Nich. There are three poor people below you desired to call.

Ord. I shall return directly.—[NICHOLAS *following*] Where are you going? Stay here,—Clara may want something—you'll give her a new lesson now, Mr. M'Classic—I think she has got enough of amo and amas. [*Exit* ORDEAL.

Nich. Zooks! he's jealous, zure as a gun, and left me here to watch you—but ecod, I'll be no spoil-sport—so teach away—I love, you love—he loves. [*Exit* NICHOLAS.

Cla. What are you musing on?—I like to hear your instructions when we are alone.

Doug. [*Aside.*] To seduce such innocence would be damnable: when you are married to Mr. Ordeal, my instructions will no longer please,—you love him?

Cla. I do indeed, as much as if he was my father, —but I never think of him when you are present.

Doug. Then you love him from gratitude?

Cla. Just so!—could I have any other motive?—If there be any other kind of love, I wish you'd let me know it.

Doug. There is another kind,—give me your hand—there is a love known by its effects; it beats on the pulse, trembles on the breath, gives eyes to the thoughts, and thoughts to the eyes.

Cla. O la! then I'm sure you are in love, for your eyes speak and laugh:—why did you touch my hand?—indeed—indeed, I'm afraid I have taken it from you—I hope there's no danger in it.

Doug. Love is the child of desire, nursed by delight—weaned by inconstancy, consumed by neglect, killed by dissembling, and buried by ingratitude.

Cla. How cruel to kill it.

Doug. But then 'tis the parent of jealousy, the

disuniter of friendship, and cause of disobedience; an arbitrary tyrant of the mind, that triumphs over wisdom, tramples upon prudence, and vanquishes even virtue.

Cla. O, you fright me with that description.

Doug. But where virtue is the basis of this passion, it produces the utmost happiness enjoyed on earth, and gives mortals a taste of heaven.

Cla. Now that is delightful! and to tell you the truth, I have heard my guardian speak of it, but I could never feel it in his hand as I did in yours: he says "love is fire full of cold—honey full of gall—and pleasure full of pain;"—but I see he knows nothing of the matter:—are you really in love?

Doug. Yes, my dear, deeply—deeply; but why do you ask?

Cla. Because——

Doug. Here comes Mr. Ordeal.

Cla. [*Aside.*] I wish he was in Jericho.

Enter ORDEAL.

Ord. Very well—very well—here, Nicholas!—where's the rascal? Clara, my dear, seek him, and give orders for dinner, there's a good girl. [*Kisses her hand.*]

Cla. Heigho! [*looks at* DOUGLAS]—[*To* ORDEAL] I obey, sir. [*Exit* CLARA.

Ord. An amiable, modest creature, Mr. M'Classic—nothing ardent in her disposition, has no more idea of love than an infant, yet a charming fertilizing constitution, but chaste as ice,—her heart like the salamander—cold, cold, in the midst of flame.

Doug. Virtue beams in her een, and animates her countenance; like the finishing touches of the painter, it enlivens the portrait, and increases the beauty of the object.

Ord. Poetically conceiv'd, and prettily pro-

nounc'd;—yes, she shrinks from the touch, like the sensitive plant—you have a prolific imagination, Mr. M'Classic, considering you come from a northern climate [*viewing* DOUGLAS]—yet, Mr. M'Classic, there is no judging of a woman's chastity, who has never been in the way of temptation.

Doug. Very true, sir.

Ord. And women are virtuous in proportion to the temptations they withstand.

Doug. A just conclusion, sir.

Ord. Then you think it would be difficult to find a young inexperienced girl proof against promises, sighs, and tears—and who could withstand the cunning insinuations of a lover.

Doug. Certainly, sir.

Ord. Well, I think differently; I think I could trust Clara—but she's a nonpareil—yes, cool as a cucumber in a hot-bed—yet not prone to vegetation—but M'Classic, I have an experiment to make, and you must assist me.

Doug. Command me, sir.

Ord. Clara, I think, is a pure lamb.

Doug. Sir, there can be no doubt; but you were speaking of an experiment, sir.

Ord. I have fortified her mind with morals, which will prove a shield to her by day, and a breast-plate by night.—But the experiment—you must be my instrument.

Doug. In what respect, sir?

Ord. To sound the depth of her inclinations—to feel how the pulse of her affection beats towards me.

Doug. Sir!

Ord. If she should not like me—but that is a point for future consideration—if she should like me, I will marry her in the morning.

Doug. Marry her, sir!

Ord. Yes, marry her, sir.

Doug. And in the morning. O my heart! and must I lose her after all?

Ord. In the morning—I have had a special licence some time—yes, she loves me—I know she loves me—and soon as we have dined, I will go to Sir Buzzard's, to engage him and his friends to attend the ceremony. In the mean time you must try the experiment—come in to dinner, and I'll give you further instructions. [*Exeunt* ORDEAL *and* DOUGLAS.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Sir* BUZZARD'S.

Enter Sir BUZZARD *and* CHEATERLY. *Sir* BUZZARD *in* WELFORD'S *Clothes.*

Cheat. Consider, Sir Buzzard, we are in danger of a discovery every instant.

Sir Buz. What can I do?—Would you have me court the girl for you? Besides, this business raises a qualm in my conscience.

Cheat. Conscience!

Sir Buz. Yes, conscience!—my conscience cannot boast such extensive latitude and longitude as yours,—you have a convenient conscience, it stretches or contracts like India rubber: your conscience is a servant of all work—which you discharge at a moment's warning.

Enter Colonel STAFF.

Col. May the fire of a platoon never again raise my spirits, but it would be better for a man to attack a breach daily and on a forlorn hope, than to sit down before a coquet.

Cheat. Have you ever attacked a breach, colonel?

Sir Buz. You hear he has attacked a widow, and upon a forlorn hope.

Col. I say, sir, your sister is a coquet.

Sir Buz. I say she is a downright jilt. He who confides in the sex will be deceived—I despise them.

Cheat. Yet keep a girl in a corner.

Sir Buz. But not from affection to the girl. I keep her because it pleases my humour and vexes my wife. You know the sex but superficially: there is my rib; when we married, she was all delicacy and good humour, and from her smooth behaviour and oily tongue, I considered her a miracle of goodness. But the wind soon veer'd about, and before the end of the honey-moon blew a rank storm.

Col. Talking of storms!

Sir Buz. Hear me out—Upon refusing to indulge her in some fashionable subscriptions, there was a total eclipse of the amiable; her passion swell'd like a roaring sea, producing nothing but fury, outrage, and noise.

Enter ORDEAL *and Widow.*

Ord. I forgive you, madam,—I forgive you—being determined to marry Clara in the morning.

Sir Buz. Ordeal, I understand they have been abusing you—but their best friends can't 'scape their malignity—they have tongues of charcoal, with which they are for ever blackening or burning characters.

Ord. I shall immediately set off with my bride for London, from whence we will proceed on the grand tour.

Cheat. Have not I heard you exclaim against the grand tour?

Ord. You have heard me exclaim against sending our youth abroad without a proper controul. You

have heard me say, that on such expeditions they too often contaminate their native virtue and constitutions, by bartering the honest habits acquired in old England, for the gew-gaw ornaments and despicable effeminacies of the continent.

Wid. Pray, Mr. Ordeal, what retinue do you travel with?

Cheat. The young Scotchman, Pure Nature's tutor, no doubt will make one.

Sir Buz. I wish he may not make two; I speak my mind, Ordeal.

Wid. What, the colonel's friend! split you through the crown?

Col. She is at it again—madam, you should recollect.

Wid. Then I suppose you will no longer restrain her taste in dress—but allow her to throw off her present thin attire, and appear like a fashionable christian—in feathers and a hoop.

Ord. A hoop! no—it makes a woman appear like a walking sphere, encircled from the nadir to the meridian—and if the effeminacy of the men was not so well known, one would be apt to imagine that the women were all in a state of—But I will not speak my mind now, though it is my way.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Coffee is served in the saloon, madam.

Cheat. Have you seen Miss Constance? [*Aside to the servant.*]

Serv. I believe, sir, she is reading in the garden.

[*Exit Servant.*

Ord. Sir Buzzard, I admire your dress,—you look as fine—as—as the King of Prussia in wax-work.

[*Exit* ORDEAL.

Col. [*To the Widow.*] Shall I have the honour of your hand, madam?

Wid. No, sir, I shall never give my hand to a man who has lost my good opinion. [*Exit Widow.*

Col. [*To Sir* BUZZARD.]—Do you hear that?

Cheat. After her.

Sir Buz. After her purse, you mean.

Col. Capricious woman! [*running, turns round.*] —I once knew a major—

Sir Buz. Know the widow, man—

Col. A major in the forty-second.

Cheat. Away with you! [*They push him out.*] [*Exit Colonel.*

Cheat. You will excuse me to the ladies—Constance, you hear, is in the garden: I will seek her, and for the last time plead my passion; but if she perseveres in rejecting my addresses, I have your consent to carry her by stratagem. [*Exit* CHEATERLY.

Sir Buz. Carry her off any way, and I will be satisfied. [*Exit Sir* BUZZARD.

SCENE II.—*A Grotto.*

CONSTANCE *discovered sitting, sleeping, with a Handkerchief over her Face—a Book near her.*

Enter CHEATERLY.

Cheat. Asleep!—to disturb her would offend delicacy—and I must sooth her,—I will sit here till she wakes: here comes one of the servants. [*Retires.*]

Enter WELFORD. [*His sword under his arm.*]

Wel. How my landlady will laugh to see me thus caparison'd!—A woman sleeping, by the god of love! —what a fortunate fellow am I!—no sooner does one adventure vanish than another presents itself to my view—how gently she breathes,—the gale is reviving,—[*she sighs*] a sigh of sensibility,—poor soul!

—it were pity she should sigh in vain. Yes, I will see her face. [*Takes off the handkerchief.*] O, Heavens!—it is Constance—my life!—my heaven!—

[*Embraces her.*

Con. Help!—oh, help!—

Enter CHEATERLY.

Cheat. Unhand the lady, villain!

Con. O, heavens, it is De Courcy!—

Wel. Ha! is it you? I have met my blessing and my curse.

Cheat. De Courcy!—

Wel. I have been your dupe, sir, and I know it. —Am well inform'd of those combinations by which you defrauded me,—and am determin'd, sir, to give the law its course.

Cheat. I scorn to retort your assertions,—you have been a dupe to your own folly. Pride and high sounding language but ill suit with the meanness of your appearance, assumed for the purpose of some low intrigue;—metamorphose into a gentleman, and I'll enforce satisfaction for this insolence.

[*Exit* CHEATERLY.

Con. O, I shall faint.

Wel. My dear love,—pardon the momentary neglect into which passion led me.—I have been but one day in England—to-morrow I should have gone for York,—my soul was all impatience to see you.—

Con. What, in a livery!

Wel. A livery—yes,—it is a disguise, I own, worn for a purpose I'll not attempt to palliate or justify—but your appearance like a heavenly vision inspires me with virtuous thoughts.

Con. I do not urge an explanation which must increase your confusion.

Wel. I will explain all another time.—Here comes some of the family.

Enter Sir BUZZARD *and* ORDEAL.

Sir Buz. These alarms will ruin my constitution,—it was fortunate I took bark this morning, or my whole nervous system would be shaken to pieces.—Where is this gentleman?—Cheaterly tells me a stranger has been rude to you. Have you turn'd him out, Patrick?

Con. [*To* ORDEAL.] Sir, I shall send a letter to your house immediately, to which I implore your attention—I am wretched, you were my father's friend.

Ord. Madam, if I was not, I am a man, and every thing that affects my fellow-creatures concerns me.

[*Exit* CONSTANCE.

Sir Buz. Patrick,—do you hear?—no answer,—I shall never recover my health,—don't irritate me, rascal.—

Wel. Rascal!—to whom do you address yourself?

Sir Buz. To you, scoundrel.—

Wel. Why, you despicable,—that epithet again, and this sword.—

Sir Buz. This is no Irishman!—what the devil is become of your brogue?—Who are you?

Wel. A gentleman!—

Ord. A gentleman! ha, ha, ha, this is good!—a gentleman in a livery!—but which are you? a gentleman in waiting, or a gentleman of the road?

Sir Buz. Ah, ah! I now see how I came by the new suit, smuggled from Paris.

Ord. The servant is mad, and Sir Buzzard has caught the contagion.

Sir Buz. I have it here. [*Striking his head.*]

Ord. What have you there?

Wel. Nothing that I know of, upon my honour.

Ord. Nothing in your master's head! How dare you joke with your betters, young man?

Sir Buz. I shall be the laughing-stock of fools and jest of the malignant.

Enter GRACE.

Grace. Oh, dear, dear, sure there is no harm done! It is all my fault,—Miss Constance is ready to break her heart;—you must know, sir, I was the only person in the house who knew this gentleman; he is her lover, and he wheedled me, and wheedled me, till I consented to bring him into the house, and so I shut him into my lady's closet.

Wel. The girl tells the truth.

Ord. He is a gentleman, and you shut him up in your lady's closet. [*To Sir* BUZZARD.] Now, I see what you conceive in your head.

Grace. And so, sir, my lady coming in, the gentleman was oblig'd to lie close.

Sir Buz. And he wheedled you, and wheedled you,—and he lay close,—eh—and he never saw your lady?

Grace. Never saw her, as I hope to be saved!

Wel. You hear the girl swear.

Ord. O, it's plain there was nothing between them.

Grace. Nothing between them indeed, sir, that is the naked truth. [*Exit* GRACE.

Sir Buz. Then give me leave, sir, to inquire who you are? and what are your pretensions to visit my niece?

Wel. As to my pretensions, sir, nothing can be better founded:—I love the lady,—but what is still more material, the lady has long since confessed that she loves me.

Ord. Candid and open.

Sir Buz. And your name is De Courcy?

Wel. To that name I was born, but an old good-natured uncle taking it into his head to visit elysium —in obedience to his will, and in gratitude for six-

teen hundred pounds a-year, I now bear the name and arms of Welford.

Ord. You seem an honest fellow, worthy the love of Constance.

Sir Buz. What is his honesty to me? I am to inform you, sir, the father of Constance is dead; I am her natural guardian, and you shall never have my consent to marry her.

Wel. May I never obtain her consent, if ever I ask yours.

Sir Buz. She has not a shilling fortune.

Wel. I am glad of it, I have sufficient fortune for both,—I will settle a fortune on her.

Ord. A fellow of noble generosity!—

Sir Buz. There is a gentleman I am determined she shall marry.

Wel. Mark me,—let that gentleman be whom he may, if he presumes to speak to her, write to her, or even thinks of her as a wife, I shall make him such an example—but this is losing time,—farewell, I must wait on Constance. [*Going.*]

Sir Buz. [*Opposing him.*] You shall not go an inch into my house,—that is your way out.

Wel. I will go into any man's house, sir, where she is,—debar me access to my love!—Were you the grand signor, and detain'd her, I would force into the inmost recesses of your seraglio, put you to death in the midst of your janissaries, and carry her off in triumph.

Ord. I do not often swear, it is not my way, but damn me if I would not assist you.

Sir Buz. Nay, then we must try your courage. [*Lays his hand upon his sword.*]—O, for an astringent to brace my nerves.

Wel. Excuse me from running you through the body while you wear my clothes; that coat is in excellent taste, and I cannot think of running it through the body.—

Ord. A soldier, and a wit!—

Sir Buz. Take it, take it; [*throws off* WELFORD'S *coat*]—now let me see if you get into my house.

[*Draws.*

Ord. What, going to fight a duel!—Oh, for shame! —duelling is a mode of satisfaction unworthy gentlemen, practised now by every vulgar fellow;—people of fashion should explode it.

Sir Buz. [*Trembling.*] You know I pay great respect to your opinion,—and if,—but he shall not go into my house.

Ord. Consider what an improper place for quarrelling.

Wel. You are right, sir, this is too cold a situation for stripping;—[*takes up the clothes and hands them to* ORDEAL] now for Constance, love, and happiness. [*Exit* WELFORD, *running.*

Ord. Bravo, my boy!—bravo!

Sir Buz. Sure some malign devil has determined to make me ridiculous!—let me after him.

[ORDEAL *holds him.*

Enter Lady FLIPPANT, MUSLIN, *and* GRACE.

Lady Flip. Are you mad, Sir Buzzard?

Sir Buz. Stark mad!

Ord. Nearly stark naked mad.

Sir Buz. The clothes,—the smuggled clothes you provided for me.

Lady Flip. } Ha, ha, ha!
Ord. }

Sir Buz. Away! you old——get home;—perhaps your Scotch tutor may prepare Pure Nature for the grand tour, and provide you more company than you expect.—Why did I marry?—why plunge into a mortal disease, for which there is no remedy but poison,—no relief but death? [*Exit Sir* BUZZARD.

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Ord. Can I see Constance?

Lady Flip. She is lock'd up in her own apartment to avoid her lover.

Ord. To avoid him!—He is a noble fellow, and she must have him;—I will in to Sir Buzzard, and argue this case:—he presumes to controul this young lady, his niece, by parental authority; but I will convince him, the principle of that authority is to make our children or wards happy,—not miserable.

[*Exit* ORDEAL.

Mus. Sir Buzzard is in a horrid rage.

Lady Flip. I must contrive to appease him. Constance I suppose has her suspicions;—an amiable girl—I really love her, pity her situation, and am determined never to see Welford again, but for the purpose of facilitating a marriage between them.—I must also effectuate a breach between my sister and this pusillanimous colonel.

Mus. That may be easily accomplished—the widow has no small share of vanity.

Lady Flip. True!—

Mus. We must persuade her she was the object of Mr. Welford's admiration.

Grace. I will swear he brib'd me to introduce him to her.

Mus. And I will contrive to get her and the gentleman together at my house, and your ladyship shall send the colonel to surprise them, which will produce an irreconcileable quarrel.

Lady Flip. Here comes the widow—do you lay the train.

Enter the Widow VOLATILE.

Wid. De Courcy is gone, after a very loud altercation with Cheaterly, which terminated in mutual vows of vengeance: he charges Cheaterly with having imposed on him at play.

Lady Flip. There is nothing scandalous in that

—play has become a science, fashionable in practice, and like other *faux pas*, 'tis only blameable in discovery. Pray how has Constance behaved?

Wid. Remains locked up in her own room, and perseveres in denying an interview to her lover:—this De Courcy is in my opinion a charming fellow.

Lady Flip. But I must know for what purpose he was brought into my closet.—I am certain Constance was not the object; so speak, Grace.

Grace. Well, my lady, the truth is, the gentleman came after the widow.

Lady Flip. I thought so,—this duplicity, sister, hurts me.

Grace. Dear, my lady, it is all my fault,—the gentleman saw Mrs. Volatile at the play with your ladyship, and sent for me in the morning—and,—but am I sure of pardon if I tell?

Lady Flip. Yes, if you tell nothing but the truth.

Grace. Well, my lady, the poor young gentleman to be sure swore bitterly he was smitten;—By all the gods, says he, she is one of the most beautifulest,—most youngest, and most elegantest creatures my eyes ever beheld!—but I, telling him as how she was positively engaged to Colonel Staff,—then he began to curse.—

Wid. Why presume to tell him so?—Who gave you knowledge of my engagements?

Lady Flip. Hear the girl, sister; [*Aside.*] she's caught.

Grace. Don't be angry, madam,—I told him, madam—thinking no harm, and so he curs'd, and call'd on heaven, and poor gentleman sigh'd so, that I took pity on him, and by his persuasions and promises brought him into the closet, where he was to have been concealed,—Yes, ma'am—'till I could have contriv'd to have brought you into the room, which I should have done, but that my lady first came, and then Sir Buzzard, who made up the noise that disturb'd the house.

Lady Flip. You are an impudent girl: go wait in my dressing-room 'till my coming.

Grace. Yes, my lady,—but oh, sure, you don't intend to discharge me,—what could I do when so pretty a gentleman knelt to me, and cried to me for assistance—and squeez'd my hand, and forc'd a purse into my bosom—Oh! oh! [*crying, apart to the widow*]—you will speak to my lady.

Wid. I will, Grace! [*apart*] there [*gives money*] —let me see you presently. [*Exit* GRACE, *laughing.* A pretty scheme this!—your maid, Lady Flippant, has used me well—did I ever make any positive engagements with the colonel?

Lady Flip. I hope not, but really you take such pains to torment each other, I was apprehensive you were privately married.

Wid. Heaven forbid!—I have been prudently considering the colonel's situation some time past—his estate I understand has been long languishing in a decline, and his creditors no doubt are in expectation of mine.

Lady Flip. Then to bestow it on Welford—think of the pleasure of sweet five and twenty smiling upon you from morning 'till night.

Mus. And from night to morning—think of that, madam.

Lady Flip. Then our triumph over a girl of such beauty as Constance—the buz of the polite world, and their impertinent ill-nature.

Wid. Certainly there are inducements.

Lady Flip. Inducements! you will have the exquisite satisfaction of being lampoon'd, epigramm'd, and paragraph'd—or perhaps be etch'd in aqua fortis, and stuck up in the print shops. Then to have the tribe of antiquated maidens, disgusted wives, and disappointed widows railing at your prudence, yet envying your situation—"Lord bless us!"—ejaculates Lady Toothless, "I wonder at her

indiscretion, to marry a man so young. The colonel would have been much more suitable."—Then she takes five years from your lover's age, and adds to yours—"That's he!—that's he!"—exclaims Miss Squintum, as she ogles from a side-box, with one eye worn out in searching for defects in beauty, and the other on the decline—"That's he,—but I cannot perceive what she saw in the fellow; he is as plain as herself—and I wonder how women can follow fellows."—The blooming youth hands you to your seat—the whole circle stare at you—a general whisper's breath'd round—you gaze in return with perfect composure—salute your acquaintance—adjust your tucker, giggle behind your fan, assume a perfect indifference, whisper your handsome husband to mortify them, and laugh out to shew your inward satisfaction and ineffable contempt.

Wid. But how is all this to be brought about?

Mus. Call at my house within an hour, and if I do not settle it, discard me from your confidence.—

Lady Flip. She shall be punctual—come, sister, I see you were unacquainted with your lover's passion,—but you must acknowledge I had sufficient cause for suspicion.

Wid. Yet you must allow there was no deceit on my part. [*Exit Widow.*

Mus. You have play'd your part admirably.

Lady Flip. Yes, Muslin, all good actresses are not upon the stage.

[*Exeunt Lady* FLIPPANT *and* MUSLIN.

SCENE III.—ORDEAL'S *House.*

Enter DOUGLAS, CLARA, *and* NICHOLAS.

Nich. You are no longer a Scotchman, I zee—

Doug. Yes, Nicholas, I have only laid aside the

tone and accent, but am still a Scotchman; I have no reason to be ashamed of my country, and I trust my country will never have reason to be ashamed of me.

Nich. Why zee master, I could never zee any difference between your English and Scotch; though to be zure I could hear it in their speaking, and that is the only difference I think should ever be between them: but take a fool's advice now,—make the best use of your time. [*Exit* NICHOLAS.

Doug. What employs your thoughts, my love?

Cla. In truth, love itself: if the pleasing description you have given me be true, and I have no reason to doubt your veracity, to live with those we love must be the extent of human happiness;—but then, Mr. Ordeal has told me that your sex often requite the most sincere passion with cold indifference.

Doug. The charge is too true; but my affection can only cease with life.

Cla. I owe every thing to Mr. Ordeal's goodness, and the very arguments you urged to gain my love persuade me against being ungrateful!—obedience is the only return I can make his kindness, and how can I disobey him, when my heart informs me that ingratitude is one of those heinous sins at which Heaven is most offended?

Doug. It is true, no quality of the soul is more lovely than gratitude;—but Mr. Ordeal is not actuated by passion,—he offers you his hand from motives of generosity, not love,—all you owe him is friendship, which an union with me could not diminish.

Cla. You can persuade me to any thing;—you swear you love me,—I believe you,—and if the pleasure I take in seeing you, and hearing you, and the pain I feel when you leave me, be love, I love you above all things.

Re-enter NICHOLAS.

Nich. Have you settled every thing?

Doug. Good Nicholas, do not interrupt her.

Nich. Who, I, a spoil-sport! mum!——

[*Exit* NICHOLAS.

Cla. Would not my consenting to marry you be injustice to my benefactor?

Doug. The value I set upon your love is such, I would not accept it, but as the voluntary gift of your soul!—I will obtain Mr. Ordeal's consent.

Cla. Then I am for ever yours. [*He kisses her hand.*]

Enter ORDEAL *and* NICHOLAS.

Ord. [*Aside.*]—What do I see!

Cla. But when will you obtain his consent?

Ord. Never.

Cla. O, we are undone.

Ord. [*to* DOUGLAS.] Is this the way you repay my confidence? And you, [*to* CLARA] innocent miss, is this a grateful return for years of kindness?—But [*to* NICHOLAS.] what shall I say to you, rascal!—you, whom I thought watchful as a lynx, have slumbered like another Argus—were your eyes piped into a nap by this Mercury, or was your mouth stopped by a sop, Mr. Cerberus?

Nich. Yes, I loves a sop;—but I will be called no names—zee master,—our bargain is this, a month's warning, or a month's wages; zo, pay me, and I'll go, but remember it was not I brought maister M'Classic into the house. [*Exit* NICHOLAS.

Doug. Your resentment, sir, must fall solely upon me—I only have deceiv'd you,—a word in private, —[*takes* ORDEAL *aside*] could human nature repel the influence of such beauty?—[*points to* CLARA] had I been less honourable, or Clara less virtuous, I might now perhaps be imposing upon your credu-

lity a seduced maid, with a vitiated mind: I am young,—Clara is pure nature,—the experiment I have made was dangerous.——

Ord. But you were only to have made the experiment to try how far her inclinations coincided with mine.

Doug. Consider, she was an orange tree.

Ord. You were to have been the instrument for promoting my happiness.

Doug. She possess'd the verdure of the spring—

Ord. Hear me!

Doug. The blossom of the summer——

Ord. Hear me!

Doug. The ripe fruit of autumn.

Ord. And you would consider me the falling leaf in winter—hear me, sir!—[*loud*] Have you not been urging the temptations of pleasure to seduce her into your own designs?—have you not alienated her affections from me?

Doug. Sir, I came into your house for the very purpose of gaining her love.

Ord. Who are you, sir?

Doug. A soldier—my name Douglas,—my fortune a competency,—my country Scotland—the same person who assisted you when attack'd by ruffians on Marlborough Downs.

Cla. The kind gentleman in whose arms I fainted!

Doug. From the first instant I saw her, my soul caught the inspiration of virtuous love.

Ord. You are unfashionable, sir,—from the dissipated conversation of the young fellows of the times, one would imagine there was neither honesty in man, nor chastity in woman;—but your conduct contradicts their aspersions.

Doug. It is too true, the arts of seduction are so sedulously studied, that honest love appears in danger of being extirpated.

Ord. There are many, many melancholy examples;—but be assured, young man, though sensual pleasures arise from seducing innocence, it is plucking blossoms from a sweet-briar, which will rankle in the flesh.

Doug. Your observation, sir, is just,—though it does not apply to me.——

Ord. My censure does not fall solely on youth,—no, the gardens of beauty and innocence are also despoil'd by old debilitated wretches, who cannot cultivate the soil, but lay waste its beauties.

Cla. Do you forgive me, sir?

Ord. I blame you not, I am your debtor for many instances of duty and affection;—look on her, Douglas;——yet her beauty is the least of her excellence,——but as it is a principal part of benevolence to assist another most when there is most need of assistance,—and that you need not owe too much to the generosity of your husband,—as you cannot be my wife, I adopt you for my child—love inspires its votaries with sentiment, and I acknowledge the benign influence. [*Joins their hands.*]

Doug. You weep, my lovely Clara!

Ord. And so do you,—and so do I,———I see you are all joy,——but, my children, the transports of a virtuous passion are the least parts of its happiness,—we will this instant to Sir Buzzard Savage's,—a young lady, his niece, calls for my protection.

Doug. You mean Constance Heartfree; young De Courcy of York, my particular friend, is, I believe, betrothed to her.——

Ord. You are right;—take your bride by the hand;—the women will laugh at me for losing her, but I am above the laugh of the world, and I will laugh at the world in my turn,—that is my way.—

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Lady* FLIPPANT'S *Dressing-Room.*

Enter Lady FLIPPANT.

Lady Flip. The storm bends this way, and here will I meet it. [*Sits down, and takes a book.*

Enter Sir BUZZARD *and* GRACE.

Sir Buz. [*Pushing* GRACE *before him.*] You shall instantly march out of my house. [*Pushes her.*

Grace. My lady scorns your suspicions.

Sir Buz. Stop your gabble, you diminutive pandar in petticoats!—It is clear that Constance was ignorant of Welford's arrival in England!—It is apparent he did not come to my house after her.—What, is your noble blood at a loss for an excuse?

Lady Flip. Who has instilled jealousy into that head of yours, barren of every thing but what is monstrous! [*Reads.*

Sir Buz. It is your ladyship has made my head monstrous.

Enter Colonel STAFF.

Col. Sure the devil instigates some women!—the widow——

Sir Buz. Do not throw the blame on the poor *devil*—it is nature instigates them, and she is to the full as subtle and certain in her operations.

Col. I just now spoke to her as she stept out of a chair into Mrs. Muslin's, and in return was shot through the heart with a look of ill-nature and contempt——if I was not the coolest fellow in the service, I'd run mad,—aye,—mad, mad—

Lady Flip. You would have cause to run mad, if you knew she is now at Mrs. Muslin's, enjoying a tête-à-tête with Welford.

Col. Impossible!

Grace. I am ready to take my oath of it! [*To Sir* BUZZARD.] The truth is, I told a great lie to your honour.

Sir Buz. O, confound me, but I believe you now. [*Exit* GRACE.

Col. The widow gone to Welford, on an assignation—ha! ha! ha! I will after her this instant, and cut his throat!—No, I will not stir—I am pleas'd—perfectly pleas'd!—I will discharge such a volley about his ears:—gone to visit Welford!—but why should I be vex'd?—I will follow her, spring a mine, and blow them up together—Burst on her like a hand-grenade.

Lady Flip. Ridiculous—you are all gunpowder.

Col. Ungrateful woman!

Sir Buz. Deceitful sex!

Lady Flip. Surprise her and her lover!

Col. I will break with her——I mean I will pursue her. [*Exit.*

Lady Flip. Well, you see it was your sister, not your wife, Welford came to visit: are you ready to make an apology for your vulgar suspicions?

Sir Buz. An apology to you! O, impudence! have you not been the rust of my health, have you not fretted me down to a mere skeleton? Make you an apology!—give me my wasted flesh.

Lady Flip. I shall for London in the morning.

Sir Buz. If you dare!

Lady Flip. Will shew out at every place of public entertainment.

Sir Buz. At your peril.

Lady Flip. At your cost.

Sir Buz. The law gives me authority to confine you, and I will exercise it—I am your husband.

Lady Flip. I am heartily sorry for it!—will have public breakfasts, public dinners, and public nights.

Sir Buz. You shall have bread and water, in a narrow room.

Lady Flip. A box at the Opera, and subscribe to all the concerts.

Sir Buz. You devil!

Lady Flip. Will purchase a new vis-a-vis—a town chariot and phaeton.

Sir Buz. You—you have a design upon my life.

Lady Flip. Heav'ns! how ardently I pant to be elevated in the phaeton, to take the circuit of Hyde Park, rolling in a cloud of dust, four horses, two outriders, whip in hand, flowing manes, hunters' tails, sweep down Piccadilly, turn into St. James's street,—up fly the club-house windows, out pop the powdered heads of the bucks and beaux of fashion—some nod, some smile, some kiss hands,—all praise—She is a goddess, exclaims one,—a Venus, ejaculates another,—an angel, sighs a third. I cut on, flash down Pall Mall swift as lightning, rattle furiously through Charing-Cross, overturn Lady Dapper's whim and cats at Northumberland House, lose a wheel in the Strand, leap from my seat as the carriage falls, and am received in the arms of some handsome fellow whom love has directed to my assistance.

Sir Buz. She is mad! she is mad! outrageous mad!

Lady Flip. He carries me into a house, fainting—

Sir Buz. Stop there; I will be divorc'd.

Lady Flip. Then I will have a separate maintenance.

Sir Buz. Not a shilling.

Lady Flip. You cannot deprive me of my settlement.

Sir Buz. Ay, there is the grievance! O, confound

all jointures and settlements, those encourage your levities, and stimulate you all to transgress.

[*Exit Sir* BUZZARD.

Lady Flip. [*Sits.*] My poor spirits are exhausted! Heigh ho! I am tired of this dissipated life.

Enter CONSTANCE.

Con. I wait upon your ladyship, to return grateful thanks for the many favours you have conferred upon me, and to take my leave, as I am determined to quit this house.

Lady Flip. What! without your uncle's consent?

Con. I cannot think his consent necessary, while he and your ladyship assent to the persecution I experienced from a man I despise.

Lady Flip. [*Rising.*] And pray where do you intend to go?

Con. I have found a protector—Mr. Ordeal, the friend of my unfortunate father. Lady Flippant, it hurts my heart to part you upon those terms.

[*Weeps and walks as going.*

Lady Flip. In tears, Constance! [CONSTANCE *returns.*] Why so distress'd?

Con. My heart is too full.

Lady Flip. Be seated; [*they sit*] you love this Mr. Welford sincerely—but he is! [*Aside.*] what is it to me what he is! [*Rises.*

Con. To me he is every thing—and it is my hope!—[*Rises.*]—but why should I hope?—

Lady Flip. Constance—I really love you—our manners have divided us; but be assured, my dear girl, though I run the circle of fashionable life, my mind is not devoid of sensibility—our education has been different.

Con. It was my happiness to receive instruction from a pious and tender mother, who early taught me the precepts of virtue, and impressed upon my heart, that a pure reputation with humble poverty

was preferable to a suspicious character, though blazoned with all the pomp and ornaments of elevated life—but she is no more.

Lady Flip. [*Rises.*] Alas, Constance! it was my misfortune to be educated in all the giddy foibles and levities of the times.

Con. [*Rises.*] But I have observed a disposition in your ladyship susceptible of the tenderest offices of friendship,——and where there is feeling——

Lady Flip. There is hope of reformation—you would have said so—indeed, Constance, there are sentiments here, which often upbraid me; but sure nothing has transpir'd, injurious to my honour.

Con. The world is censorious, madam, and those whose conversation is the most entertaining are often the most dangerous; to simplicity they impute cunning, and give a criminal construction to the most innocent actions.

Enter ORDEAL *and* CLARA.

Ord. I am all joy, Lady Flippant! Constance, this is Clara; hereafter I trust you will be inseparable friends.

Cla. I shall endeavour to merit the lady's friendship

Ord. They may boast of Queen Emma walking over burning ploughshares, but here is a girl has done more, she has lived in a fashionable family without censure. [*Takes* CONSTANCE *by the hand.*

Lady Flip. But, Mr. Ordeal, what is the cause of your joy?

Ord. It must be disclos'd—Pure Nature has bestowed her hand and heart on the Scotch lad, who turns out to be Captain Douglas, Welford's intimate friend.

Con. Sir, I know the gentleman, and he bears a high character.

Lady Flip. Constance, take this young lady to the

drawing-room, send Grace to me, and order your maid over to Welford's, to let him know you will be there presently. I have a serious reason for my request, and will not be denied.

Con. I obey. [*Exeunt* CONSTANCE *and* CLARA.

Lady Flip. The poor girl's situation is truly pitiable—it was our subject when you came in—the tears are not yet out of my eyes.

Ord. Never blush for weeping; tears are the certain symptoms of a noble soul.

Lady Flip. Do you know that I have serious thoughts of throwing aside all fashionable levities?

Ord. I know it is almost time; I believe your inclinations are virtuous, and your irregularities I do not impute to nature;—no, my lady, nature has endowed you with amiable qualities, among which I think generosity is prevalent—like most of your sex, you have taken up levity through whim, and maintain it through habit, though perhaps your soul struggles to be delivered from the trammels.—break them, then, and you will do more than Cæsar;—he conquered countries,—but the greatest glory human nature can acquire is to conquer ourselves;—I have good news for Constance,—her father is living.

Lady Flip. Heavens!—are you serious?

Ord. I have had letters from London, and he returns by the next ships from India;——nay more,—he has remitted thirty thousand pounds to her sole use, with directions to prepare a house for his reception.

Lady Flip. O, I am overjoy'd—why has she never heard from him before?

Ord. He was sent upon an embassy to the interior parts of the country, and his letters were intercepted and destroyed.—But seriously, has your ladyship known nothing of this before?

Lady Flip. Never.

Ord. There is roguery on foot,—an express was

sent to your seat at York, which not meeting the lady there was forwarded to this city, and delivered at this house.

Lady Flip. I see into it; this accounts for the warm impetuous passion of Cheaterly; the girl and her fortune were no doubt to be sacrificed, between him and my worthy spouse. Then you must assist me in persuading Constance to go to Welford; it will produce an incident which will punish the young gentleman's passion for intrigue, and give Constance an authority over him; [*going, returns*] but do you believe my repentance sincere?

Ord. I hope so!—but I believe nothing without proof—that is my way—where there is levity the world will suspect, and when the world has once cause to suspect a woman, her character becomes as much the sport of its malice, as if there was a certainty of her having abandoned it.

Lady Flip. I am penitent! but do you really forgive my lecture to Pure Nature?

Ord. Yes, and am convinced you are no false prophet; for, as you foretold, Clara preferred the summer dimples of youth to the winter wrinkles of age,——I speak my mind, that is my way.

[*Exeunt* ORDEAL *and Lady* FLIPPANT.

SCENE II.—*Mrs.* MUSLIN'S.

The Widow, Mrs. MUSLIN, *and* WELFORD, *discovered at Tea.*

Wel. Your opinion, madam, is just! Vivacity is an attribute to woman,—gravity natural to man:—and probably the sexes were thus contrasted, that the saturnine disposition of the male might be relieved by the sprightliness of the female;—your smiles alleviate our pains, your approbation rewards our dangers.

Wid. And our conversation illustrates my opinion; —you are grave,—I, perhaps, too volatile.

Mus. The poor gentleman seems as if something preyed upon his mind; let me recommend matrimony,—it is the only cure for melancholy.

Wel. And often a specific for all complaints.

Mus. Well,—business must be minded. [*Going.*

Wel. [*Rises.*] Must see you to the door.

Mus. [*Aside.*] A great fortune,—may I trust her with you?

Wel. May *I* trust myself with *her?* [*Aside.*

[*Exit Mrs.* MUSLIN.

A good, merry, convenient, civil old woman;—she recommends matrimony.—[*Sits.*] Pray, madam, what kind of lover would you prefer?

Wid. I must tell you the lover I would not prefer. I would not prefer a coxcomb,—a fluttering summer insect,—a talkative creature, full of insipid gesture, laughter, and noise, who pays more attention to his hair than to his intellects,—who possesses neither sentiment for friendship, nor sensibility for love—but is curst with a soul devoid of manliness, and bent on the gratification of its own puny affections.

Wel. An excellent picture; yet the species of animal you describe are favourites.——The ladies are grown so enamoured of delicate limbs, and effeminate faces, one would imagine they wished to have their lovers women in every thing.

Enter Mrs. MUSLIN.

Mus. Dear sir, there is a woman below enquiring for you—she insists upon coming up, and has such a tongue!

Wid. I would not be seen for the world.

Mus. She would surely blast the reputation of my house.—Sir, you must go down to her.—O my poor character! [*Exit Mrs.* MUSLIN.

Wel. Any thing to save the reputation of your house. [*Going.*

Enter Mrs. MUSLIN.

Mus. Madam, madam, the slut is upon the stairs.—Step into this closet till the impudent creature is gone.—[*Puts the widow in the closet.*] You do not know, sir, that you have been sitting with Mrs. Volatile, sister to Sir Buzzard Savage.

Hon. [*Within.*] Mr. Welford.

Wel. I know that voice.

Mus. It is the clack of Mrs. Honor, waiting-maid to Miss Constance.

Wel. Then keep her out, for Heaven's sake.

Hon. [*Within.*] I will have admittance.

Mus. Coming, Mrs. Honor.——O the audacious wretch!—I see, sir, you are a man of gallantry; but pray dispatch the creature as fast as possible. [*Exit Mrs.* MUSLIN.

Hon. [*Within.*] Madam, I insist upon going in first.

Grace. [*Within.*] No, me'm—you will pardon me.

Enter GRACE *and* HONOR *pushing in together.*

Wel. What, two!——Ladies, your most obedient.——[*Bows—they curtsey.*]

Hon. You have no business here, me'm——

Grace. My business, me'm, is no business of yours ——or if it was your business, me'm, yet it is not the business of the likes of you to look down upon the likes of me, me'm.

Hon. The likes of you I look down upon with scorn.——It is not for the likes of you, to look up to the likes of me, me'm.——I serves a lady of vartue.

Grace. Vartue! Your insinuation is low, me'm, high as you carry your head.

Wel. Grace, stand on my right hand—Honor,

take your place on my left—How happy would it be for England, were all her great men in my situation—Grace supporting one side, Honor supporting the other.—Now, ladies, to the cause of your visit.

Grace. My lady understanding that her sister was here——
Hon. My lady sent me to let you know—— } *Together.*

Wel. One at a time.

Grace. Sir, you must know—
Hon. My lady sent—— } *Together.*

Wel. Here is a guinea for her who speaks *second* ——What, dumb!——But money seals as well as unseals the mouths of great speakers.

Hon. Me'm, I shall certainly speak first—Sir, you must know——

Grace. Speak first, me'm! I serve a lady of quality.

Wel. Order in the house—let me settle this point of precedence—I believe it is regular that Grace should take the lead of Honor, so Mrs. Grace begin.

Hon. Thank you for preferring she. [*Walks about.*

Wel. Now Grace, what is your business with me?

Grace. La, sir, I have no business with *you*—I want to speak with Mrs. Volatile.

Wel. Child, she is not here.

Grace. Not *here*—but I believe she is *there.*
[*Points to closet.*

Wel. By this guinea she is not. [*Gives money.*

Grace. By this guinea I will swear it—mum—but my lady wants to see her directly—Mrs. Honor, your very obedient—an audacious hussy!—[*Aside.*
[*Exit* GRACE.

Hon. Me'm, your most humble—— [*Aside.*] Lord, sir, I found it as difficult to get at you, as if you had been a great Turk.

Wel. Mrs. Muslin did not know you perhaps.

Hon. Not know me! she knew me to be vartuous; though as the saying is, "tell me your company and I will tell you what you are"——and I and my mistress live in a family where there is not much vartue practised—but I am silent—servants should neither have eyes, nor ears, nor tongues, therefore I am always blind, deaf, and dumb, let me hear or see what I may.

Wel. Lower your voice, you may be over-heard.

Hon. Then there is Sir Buzzard's sister, the widow, though her husband is not dead six months, is frisky and brisk—gadding about, and running mad for another——

Wel. Speak low, a gentleman lies ill in the next room.

Hon. As to Sir Buzzard, they have put their fingers into his eyes so often, he is blind as a beetle. I must make you laugh about the widow—

Wel. I cannot permit you to stay any longer from your lady. Here's for your good report.

[*Gives money.*

Hon. Dear sir, you distress me—

Wel. Farewell—[*Pushing her out.*] [*Exit* HONOR. Heaven be praised! I have got rid of you!—Now to relieve my widow; who I suppose is mortified into humility, or bursting with rage.

Enter Widow from the Closet.

Madam, I feel for your situation, and did every thing in my power to stop the impetuous flow of the woman's tongue—but be not affected at what she said—Censure and calumny are taxes paid by the most elevated characters; nor is it possible to make defence against the impost, but by obscurity.

Wid. It is beneath me, sir, to defend my character against the aspersions of so mean a wretch—I feel, however, for the impressions her falsehoods may have made on you.

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. You seem frightened, madam; quite fluster'd, I protest—sure the gentleman attempted no rudeness—

Wid. That woman has slandered me grossly!

Wel. Sooth your passion, madam; nothing so prejudicial to beauty as intemperate warmth—consider the vulgar set up a prescription for exercising latitude of tongue, that shews no respect to persons.

Wid. Your hand, Mrs. Muslin—some drops—some water—I faint—I am overcome—I die! Oh!

[*Faints in* WELFORD'S *arms.*

Mus. Support her, dear sir, 'till I return—let me run for restoratives—[*going, returns*]—open her hands, chafe her temples,—a-lack a day—This is a master stroke of the widow's! [*Aside*]

[*Exit* MUSLIN.

Wel. This is worse than the state of Tantalus—human nature cannot hold out—she is really handsome. I will venture to kiss her, however—

Re-enter MUSLIN.

Mus. Madam, sir,—there is Miss Constance and Colonel Staff with her—

Wid. What will become of me? [*Springing from the couch.*]

Wel. What will become of me?

Enter Colonel STAFF.

Col. In his private chamber, and just sprung from his arms:—Oh, hell and furies! but I will be cool,—we, sir, will meet hereafter; this intrusion, madam, is, I see, as unseasonable as unexpected; I am sorry to have interrupted you.

Wid. I am unconcerned at your suspicions, colonel,——you will not be censorious, Miss Constance

—my business here was to prevent that imprudent step which you are about to take.

Con. You have succeeded, madam. [*Going.*

Wel. Will you hear me?

Con. I am sorry, sir, for the confusion I have caused—having gained my esteem without difficulty —you have resigned it with the same ease—

Col. [*To the Widow.*] This undeniable proof of your duplicity has reinstated my senses, and I will run the gauntlet no longer—you see I am calm—quite calm,—but I will have revenge;—you, sir?—

Wel. Well, sir!—it is my duty to clear this lady from suspicion, to which her situation lays her open, and in which I am innocently involved.

Wid. You may have an interest in justifying yourself, sir, but I request not to be included in your defence; I am going.

Col. I give up the pursuit——Madam, if my acts and deeds——

Wid. Your acts and deeds! Yes, I have heard of your acts and deeds from yourself, colonel——but, be assured, a man without spirit shall never controul the acts and deeds of my fortune.

[*Exit Widow.*

Col. A true Parthian,—she shot as she flew.

[*Exit Colonel.*

Wel. Constance, will you attend to me?

Con. No, sir;—you need not take the trouble of speaking to me now, or of enquiring for me hereafter. [*Exit* CONSTANCE.

Wel. Was ever man so unfortunate!—to have all my wishes blasted in the moment of ripening!—to lose the object of my love in the instant of recovering her—who waits there? To have an intrigue with a wife, a widow, and a maid, in the course of one day, and be disappointed in all—will nobody answer? [*Calling loud.*

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. What is the matter, sir?

Wel. Where is the lady?

Mus. She went out with the colonel.

Wel. I speak of the young lady.

Mus. She left the house in a chair,—but I cannot tell where she went.

Wel. I will this instant to Sir Buzzard's!—I will follow her over the world;—what an unfortunate fellow!— [*Exit* WELFORD.

SCENE *changes to the Parade. Enter* CHEATERLY, *followed by a Servant.*

Cheat. What answer has Doctor Spruce sent?

Serv. He said, sir, he would not write,—but remember your ungenerous treatment, and have revenge!—Pardon me, sir, but these were his words.

Cheat. Would have revenge?

Serv. Yes, sir, and I saw a letter on his table directed to Sir Buzzard Savage;—there was an attorney with him, and I heard him say the penalty is treble the money lost.

Cheat. How much is he arrested for?

Serv. Upwards of seventy pounds.

Cheat. Here is a note for a hundred—[*Gives a note.*] fly and get him discharged. [*Exit Servant.*

A letter to Sir Buzzard!—an attorney with him!—treble the penalty!—this Spruce, I fear, will turn traitor.

Enter DOUGLAS.

Captain Douglas, your most obedient,——how long have you been in Bath? I have not seen you for an age.

Doug. I believe, sir, not since the York meeting, when my friend De Courcy lost his money.

Cheat. He is too ardent to attempt play,—always off his guard.

Doug. And had the misfortune to play with those who kept a constant centinel upon his weakness;—he confided in you, and was deceived:—care, and a plain understanding, may preserve a man's property from the plunder of a common robber,—but honesty has no protection from the frauds of superior cunning.

Cheat. I won nothing from him;—I lost—the truth is, the knowing ones took us in.—

Doug. But you shared the winnings—

Cheat. Will you dare—

Doug. I will dare any thing that is honest.

Cheat. Your friend, sir, has dared to traduce my character by the imputation you insinuate. But he and you should know me better than to suppose any man could affront me with impunity.

[*Lays his hand on his sword.*

Doug. I know you have a mind capable of vindicating your conduct, even at the risque of your own life, and the life of him you have injured—men like you, habituated in deceit, become callous to humanity;—destitute of principle,—they are not deterred by the compunctions of conscience,—but will insure the profits of their cunning, even at the price of blood.

Cheat. My family, sir—

Doug. Is honourable!—speak not of your family—their virtues render your vices the more conspicuous.

Enter Sir BUZZARD.

Sir Buz. Oh you traitor!—the reverend Mr. Spruce has made a full confession.—So I have been your pigeon, but the law shall do me justice.

Cheat. This is your scheme, pusillanimous, mean wretch—[*To Sir* BUZZARD.] For you, sir, [*To* DOUGLAS.] we shall meet again. [*Exit* CHEATERLY.

Sir Buz. Yes,—at the next assizes;—the fellow's

mind is sowed with hempseed, and will yet produce a halter,—or if he escapes hanging, I shall see him perishing in a gaol, under as many wants as are in the Daily Advertiser;—have you been pigeon'd, sir?

Doug. No, sir.

Sir Buz. I have,—he has pluck'd some quill feathers from me,—he has pinion'd me!—Oh the rascal!—but I shall recover my mortgages, and bonds, with treble penalties!

Enter WELFORD *and Lady* FLIPPANT.

Wel. Distraction!—she is lost!—I have been at your house, my lady,—at Mr. Ordeal's—at every inn in the town,—but can get no tidings of her.

Lady Flip. It is surprising, you, who possess a heart open and liberal, panting with affection for the whole sex, should run distracted for the loss of an individual!

Doug. You overlook me, Welford—

Wel. Douglas!—my friend!—O, Douglas, I have lost my Constance!—I—

Lady Flip. No truant; I have been your advocate, and regained her for you—on condition of repentance—

Enter CONSTANCE *and* CLARA, *followed by* ORDEAL.

Wel. My life!— [*They embrace.*

Sir Buz. Repentance!—let him marry, and he will live and die in a state of repentance.

Con. What!—marry me, an orphan without a shilling?

Wel. Talk not of wealth,—were the riches of the world in your possession, by Heaven they would not add a grain to the estimation of your worth.

Ord. Generous and noble!

Con. [*To* ORDEAL.] How, sir, can I repay your generosity?

Ord. The satisfaction which results from aiding virtue in distress, is the only interest a generous mind can wish to receive for its services;—because it is the only interest such a mind can enjoy.

Lady Flip. Return to my house;—there you shall be acquainted with a matter which nearly concerns your happiness.

Sir Buz. Which I never expect to taste!

Ord. Your happiness is in your own power; commence the practice of virtue, and you will be enamoured of its sweets:—try the experiment, and never fear success.

Lady Flip. What say you to that, Sir Buzzard?

Sir Buz. I say a man can never be too old to mend—I say I have been positive all my life, and I say if you follow the advice of your ancient and sapient friend, my endeavours to procure domestic happiness shall not be wanting.—Ordeal, the laugh will be against us both.

Ord. Laugh at me as long as you please; but had I married Clara, the laugh would have been still stronger against me:—the Scot has done right, and the girl has done right;—the mutual inclination of two virtuous souls cannot but render them more virtuous;—the inhabitants of countries united by nature and policy should take every opportunity of strengthening the connexion;—I see you all think as I do!—and here I hope we shall also meet approbation. [*Bowing to the audience.*

TIME'S A TELL-TALE:

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.

———— Σὺ δὲ μεγαλήτορα θυμὸν,
Ισχειν ἐν ϛήθεσσι· φιλοφροσυνη γὰρ ἀμείνων· HOM. IL.

BY HENRY SIDDONS.

TO THE READER.

During a short residence in France, thirteen or fourteen years ago, I amused myself with forming a little serious drama from a story by M. Marmontel, Blandford and Coraly appearing to me two very interesting characters. These scenes lay long neglected in my port-folio.

When I made the stage my profession, I was prompted to review them, but found my hero by far too grave for a comedy. The part of Benedick was one that I had ever contemplated with delight, and it struck me that a naval character of the description might combine eccentricity with the most exalted generosity.

The play of the Stranger had then rendered the writings of Kotzebue extremely popular; and on perusing his works I found that he had also made both Shakespear and Marmontel his models:—it occurred to me, that by paraphrasing a few of his speeches I might give a degree of sprightliness to my principal character, and I felt assured that what I was doing would be new to an English audience; the nautical phrases, however, which form the allusions and constitute the aggregate, were of my own suggestion.

The father of Coraly in Marmontel is destroyed at the commencement of his story. To heighten the dramatic effect, I embodied him in the character of the elder Hardacre. The genuine applause of tears at the end of the fourth act have convinced me that I was not mistaken. No man of education or liberality has blamed me for making an elegant novel the foundation on which I have erected the Delmar family, well knowing that the most excellent writers in the English language availed themselves of these resources. The busy Morris, the proud Delville, and the dissipated Harrel are calculated for an excellent moral: indeed I have long wondered that the attempt has never been made by abler pens than mine. I am willing to allow that I have availed myself of every advantage which my reading, my reflection, or experience in my profession may have placed within my reach. I may at least hope that the annexed Comedy is written in the spirit of a man anxious to serve the cause of truth. I believe this, because it has been criticised with candour (a solitary exception cannot change my opinions) and with impartiality. Even those who have censured it have expressed themselves in the language of gentlemen, and I was never foolish enough to imagine that my production was a perfect one.

Public approbation must ever be the dearest wish of my heart, but I trust that I shall never forget the

respectful deference by which alone it is to be both obtained and preserved.

To Mr. Graham, who accepted my play in the most gentlemanly manner, I return my sincere thanks; also to Mr. Wroughton, who superintended it with a consummate skill, joined to an unremitted attention. All my brother performers exerted the most brilliant talents, with all the zeal of the most unaffected friendship:—this last consideration would have sweetened even the defeat of all my hopes. The song (the four concluding lines excepted) is a translation from Anacreon, Ode XL. Theocritus, Idyll XIX. has treated the same subject, but in a measure entirely different.

H. SIDDONS.

CHARACTERS.

Sir ARTHUR TESSEL,	*Mr Russel.*
Sir DAVID DELMAR,	*Mr Raymond.*
BLANDFORD,	*Mr Elliston.*
QUERY,	*Mr Matthews.*
RECORD,	*Mr Palmer.*
HARDACRE,	*Mr Dowton.*
Young HARDACRE,	*Mr Decamp.*
Mc GREGOR,	*Mr Maddox.*
TOBY,	*Mr Tokely.*
Lady DELMAR,	*Miss Mellon.*
ZELIDY,	*Mrs H. Siddons.*
Miss LAUREL,	*Mrs Sparks.*
OLIVIA WYNDHAM,	*Miss Duncan.*

SCENE—*Surrey.*——TIME—*A Day.*

TIME'S A TELL-TALE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An Inn.*

Enter Mc Gregor, *and* Toby *his Waiter.*

Mc Gregor. Hoot Toby lad—ye maun bustle boot bairn, Sir David's house over the way is quite crammed, some o the company to the—the—ave! the *Fête Champêtre*, ye ken will want beds wi us.

Toby. I'll take care, measter.

Mc Gregor. Gin we should stand in need o ony thing, only step to neighbour Hardacre, it is but twa miles off ye ken, and I am sure he will obleege us.

Toby. They say in these parts, that Farmer Hardacre be but a cross-grained sort of a mon, neither, measter.

Mc Gregor. Ah he kens the difference o personages, he kens the world! He and I ha baith been weel eeducated—baith come o guede families, but "*tempora mutantur*," times are changed wi me Toby! Mr. Hardacre has been a traveller.

Toby. So they do say. Neighbour Thatch do tell I that he has bought his son measter Philip a army commission.

Mc Gregor. And why for no?

Toby. Nothing: only the young officers that do come recruiting here do look so grand and so fine, and it was but the last year I saw measter Philip, helping his feyther, to dig their own field.

Mc. Gregor. Why for no bairn? ye ha næ ony leeterature, or you would ken that mony an unco muckle general, has digged potatoes on his ain ground. [*A knock at the door.*] Gang Toby; gang and speer wha's at the door. [*Exit* TOBY.

He returns conducting Captain BLANDFORD *and Mr.* QUERY.

Welcome your honours! welcome to the Grey Hound!

Query. A good smart house! Landlord! what county?

Mc Gregor. Surrey, an like your honour.

Query. Surrey! so it is. Had any rain lately? How far to Sir David Delmar's? got a newspaper in the house? Landlord, what's o'clock? Are you married?

Mc Gregor. Deel tak me gin I ken which o'these questions I ought to answer first. [*Aside.*

Query. Why so gloomy, Blandford?—got the tooth-ache, head-ache? Can I be useful?

Blandford. Now comes my turn, prithee be quiet! Landlord!

Mc Gregor. Here an like your honour!

Blandford. Send this letter to Sir David Delmar's directly.

Mc Gregor. You shall be obey'd, sair. [*Going.*

Query. Stop a moment, Mr. Landlord: I want to ask you a question.—Pray have you ever—that is—

I mean—couldn't you? never mind—it does not signify—you may go. [*Exit* Mc GREGOR.

Blandford. What a fellow is this! will you never, Ned, get rid of this cursed habit of asking questions?

Query. Nay! upon my soul you are too severe; what's the harm of a little curiosity? Without questions, how would you get at information? Would not society stagnate without it? our assemblies be mute, our newspapers insipid? What gives slander the true piquant inuendo? Question, for instance—who is the fair lady D., that has lately eloped from the Earl of F., with the gallant Major E.?—question, question, question. A skilful Query can save a character, sink a character, recover a character, and after all the questions that are made about questionable circumstances, the only question is, whether there was ever an atom of foundation for the circumstance in question.

Blandford. Thou art an odd animal, Ned! but having brought thee down with me upon an affair in which my honour and my peace are both concerned, I entreat thee to check these wild sallies of that inquisitive disposition.

Query. Peace? Honour concerned? Pray, my dear George, give me leave to ask are you going to marry that little wild girl, you have brought up so slily in a Welch cottage, and left under the care of Sir David before your last voyage?

Blandford. Have you any reason to think so?

Query. No—not exactly——you have resolved against matrimony, you know—but every body has been wondering who she is—what she is, and where she came from. A man now that was fond of prying into other people's concerns would have teazed you to death about all this—you see how indifferent I am about it. Is she pretty? What's her name?

Blandford. Oh yes—that is quite evident.

Query. To be sure, when a man is about to—

when he keeps a pretty girl snug in the country, and at last places her under the care of his own relative —Now come, my dear dear fellow, who is she?—What is she?—Any fortune?—Good family? Only answer me this time, and I'll never, never teaze you again.

Blandford. On that condition, Ned, I will own that I have something to tell you.

Query. Out with it: nay, hang ceremony, friends like us should have none—your secret?

Blandford. Is this, where the name of a lady is concerned—

Query. Well.

Blandford. Never to allow it to be endangered by ridiculous vanity, or impertinent curiosity: hang ceremony, Ned: friends like us should have none, you know.

Query. I see: I see you are laughing at me, and look ye, George! If ever again I meddle with your concerns—may I——I'll never ask another question as long as I live.

[*Sulkily, his back turned to* BLANDFORD.

Enter Mc GREGOR.

Mc Gregor. Ain Mr. Record, Sir David's steward, desires to ken, whether he may speak wi Captain Blandford.

Blandford. My old friend Record! admit him instantly.

Query. Up, and pray who is this Mr. —— mum.

Enter RECORD.

Record. My ever valued sir!

Blandford. In tears, old honesty! Is this the welcome you give to the man you have so often dandled a boy in your arms?

Record. Ah those were happy days, they'll never return! [*Sighs.*

Blandford. Life's a voyage—Keep hope in the perspective—Well what news with the family—I hear my uncle has married during my last voyage. Well, well, it's too late to repent now—What sort of a woman is my lady, pray?

Query. Aye, honest Mr. Record, pray what sort of a woman is my lady? is she young? rich? good-looking? how long has she been married?

Blandford. At it again.

Query. Oh no—no, it's no concern of mine—— thought you might like to hear—that's all.

Record. Ah, sir, my lady is a thorough bred woman of fashion, and the encumbered estate of Sir David was never equal to his ideas of the family dignity, I have told him so a hundred times, and mark the end on't.

Blandford. That's a tender subject, Record.

Record. I can't help speaking, sir, when I see all going to wrack and ruin. A gala one night in London, a *fête champêtre* the other, here, in Surrey; and my lady's sister too, Miss Laurel, giving large dinner parties every day to all who call themselves the wits and geniuses of the age; a set of hungry gentlemen who eat us out of house and home, and devour more good things in a quarter of an hour than they write in a quarter of a year.

Query. But why don't you ask after the young ladies, eh Blandford?

Blandford. Right! my lovely play-fellow Olivia Wyndham, is she with her guardian Hardacre?

Record. No, sir, it is Sir David's year. He and old Hardacre are greater enemies than ever. They have never seen or spoken to each other in their lives. Sir David thinks Hardacre wants to secure Miss Wyndham's fortune by a marriage with his son Philip, but so far from it, he has sent him to his regiment, that his honour might not be brought into a moment's question.

Blandford. Well, well! but there is another of whom you say nothing; I am sure, my uncle and his lady have both been kind to the poor girl I brought from Wales.

Record. Every body must be kind to her. She is so mild, so modest, and so grateful for what you have done.

Blandford. Nonsense! trifles not worth remembering.

Query. I dare say not: pray what were they?

Record. I know, sir, that your uncle would fain unite you to Miss Wyndham—yet when I look at the other poor girl————

Blandford. Why hark ye friend Record, you need not distress yourself on that subject. My ship is my wife, and while I live I am resolved to have no other. Marriage! in such times as these a sailor must not think on't.

Record. Yet she thinks some return for your goodness—

Blandford. Well, let her return it, by saying nothing about the matter. Sheer compassion was my only motive, I merely did my duty, and if I save a little pinnace from foundering in the ocean of adversity, I am not bound to tow it after me for life, am I, honest messmate?

Record. I have done, sir. Your uncle is anxiously expecting you at Delmar Hall.

Blandford. I attend. As my friend, you, Ned, will be sure of a hearty welcome [*to* QUERY.]. Lead the way, old acquaintance. Marriage! psha, put it out of your head, man, and when you hear of my being married—but why waste time in talking of impossibilities, come—[*he is going,* QUERY *stops* RECORD.

Query. Pray, Mr. Record, who is this Miss Zelidy that——

Blandford. [*Returns quick.*] What makes you loiter?

Query. Nothing; Mr. Record was asking a question, that was all. I follow you.

Blandford. Come then, I know you, Ned—nay, you don't quit me. Come, come.

Query. I follow; pray, Mr. Record, allow me to ask—no answer! waiter! waiter! what a house, not a waiter to speak to one.—I will have an answer, I am determined. [*Looks at his watch.*] What's o'clock? past eight! thank ye. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Sir* DAVID DELMAR'S *private Study. He is reading a Packet of Letters, in evident Perturbation.*

Sir David. Will these torments never end? [*reads*] "Sir, the money which has been due since"—psha! "Honoured sir, you were pleased to say I should be paid," "large family," "rent due." [*Throws down the letters.*] The life of a galley-slave would be a state of ease to mine; would I could retreat; retrench! retrench! humiliating thought!—I see the upstarts of the day erect their crests, point the finger at the diminished equipage, the lessening retinue—I see my wife reduced to——

ZELIDY *enters.*

Ha! who's there? I'll have no spies upon my conduct. [*Angry.*]

Zelidy. Oh dear Sir David! you frightened me so! it's only Zelidy.

Sir David. Be not alarmed, my pretty charge; come hither: what would you say now, had I something to tell you which would make you happy?

Zelidy. Words are too poor for the expressions of my grateful feelings to you, your lady, and the sweet Miss Wyndham.

Sir David. Nay, Zelidy, it is the duty of high rank to give protection wheresoever 'tis needed. [*Proud-*

ly.] Blandford will be here this morning.—[*Gives her a note, which she eagerly kisses.*]

Zelidy. My preserver! my guardian angel!—and shall I then at last behold him?

Sir David. [*Alarmed at her emotion.*] You express yourself with warmth.

Zelidy. Ah! how can I refrain? what other human being has so strong a claim on my affection?

Sir David. Affection! affection, Zelidy, is a term that——

Zelidy. Forgive, forgive me, dear Sir David; I am a wild girl, by nature and by birth. 'Tis now eight years since last I saw the captain; I was then a prattling girl; yet has his image still been stamped upon my heart. I repose on the little bench beneath his favourite tree; and as the waving boughs of the majestic oak shade me from the scorching sun-beam, I exclaim in grateful fervour, Generous! noble-minded Blandford! here is the emblem of thyself and Zelidy! oh! still defend her from the ills of life! still protect the humble flower, torn ere it blossomed from the parent branch; and but for thee had withered, drooped, and died upon its stem!

Sir David. Poor girl! but I must check this sympathy, or all my schemes are fruitless. [*Aside.*] Zelidy, it is my duty to warn you of your danger: a union between Blandford and yourself is made by many circumstances a thing impossible: your future peace demands that you should banish these romantic notions from your mind and heart.

Zelidy. I must, I ought, I will. To pray for my preserver, to implore of Providence eternal blessings on his head; that consolation surely may be mine! The sun turns not from the grateful flower that blooms and fades in gazing on his fostering brightness: nor will Blandford, placed by fortune, far, far above his lowly Zelidy, reject the simple homage of a thankful heart.—The subject affects

me, sir; some one approaches—permit me to retire. [*She goes out.*

Sir David. Poor artless girl!—But I must steel my heart against these claims. The fortune of my ward Olivia can alone preserve me from disgrace and ruin: a marriage with my nephew might secure it; but then the cottager—this Hardacre, whom Olivia's father degraded me by making my joint guardian. I see his aims; he means his son Philip! aye, there's the stumbling-block; but I shall counteract their plots. Now, Mr. Record.

Enter RECORD.

Record. According to your command, Sir David, I have been to the inn, and your nephew is now arrived; he and his friend are changing their travelling dresses, that they may have the honour of paying their respects to you and to my lady.

Sir David. 'Tis well: should my present plans succeed, Record, my difficulties will be at an end. A marriage between Blandford and my ward, Miss Wyndham, aided by my sister-in-law's union with Sir Arthur Tessel, will set me above the malice of my fate.—I hope Lady Delmar does not suspect my involvements.

Record. All hitherto is safe; how long it may continue so, Heaven only knows.

Sir David. Only save me till Sir Arthur and my nephew are united to my sister-in-law and Miss Wyndham—you shall see me reform completely.

Record. Such hopes are fruitless, sir. Captain Blandford's aversion to matrimony is more rooted than ever: were it otherwise, Hardacre would not give his consent; and as for Sir Arthur Tessel's attachment to your sister-in-law—

Sir David. Can you doubt it? his attentions at Bath—his eagerness to be invited here—

Record. Remember, sir, that Miss Venusia is neither young nor rich: your ward is both.—Sir Arthur is what is called a man of leisure. [*Sneering.*]

Sir David. What do you mean?

Record. I mean that your men of leisure do many things that would startle a plain, drudging, plodding fellow like myself. The town is full of 'em. It is men of leisure fill the card-table and the gaming-table.—Leisure sends the senator to the horse-race, and the peer to the boxing-ring: the daughters of industry are seduced by men of leisure; the sons of plain citizens are corrupted by men of leisure; and it is high time for you, my master, to exert yourself, and give a proof, that spite of the prevalence of idleness and fashion, the commercial genius of this country shall never be crushed by the vices, follies, and debaucheries of men of leisure.

Sir David. Record, you have ever been the friend of my family: your blunt sincerity convinces me you still are mine. The desperate state of my affairs——

Record. Call them not so. Do you and my lady make a noble effort; all may yet go well. If not, I fear that you will find too late, your substance has been wasted on flatterers and sycophants, whilst you have forfeited the real pride of independency, and put your meanest creditor upon a level with yourself. For how, Sir David, can you ever call that man an inferior, who can justly accuse you of withholding the hard-earned profit of his industry from his little family?

Sir David. You go too far—you presume on your past services; leave me, Mr. Record. For the future, when I need your counsel, I shall ask it.

[Record *bows and retires.*

Sir David. And am I then truly so lost? are the honours, the dignities of my family really so di-

minished in my person? I fear they are.—Hark! Sir Arthur and my ward Olivia: Record wrongs the baronet; I cannot, will not doubt his honour.

Enter Sir ARTHUR *and* OLIVIA.

Sir Arthur. Stop, stop, my dear Miss Wyndham, or my Lady Delmar will set me down for the most unpolite, unfashionable fellow in the whole world.

Olivia. My Lady Delmar! what, then, Sir Arthur, is it modern good breeding to pay all your attentions to the married dames, and leave us poor unfortunate spinsters to pine in seclusion, or sit "like patience on a monument," oh fie!

Sir David. Well urged, my dear ward.

Sir Arthur. Why, I can't exactly say whether it be good breeding or no; but I assure you upon my honour, it's the way we have in London. It would there, for instance, be quite unfashionable to be seen in a curricle with any woman under forty; if she happens to be fifty, so much the better: and if she chances to be married, why, so much the better still.

Olivia. But pray do not the ladies' husbands sometimes object to their wives driving in curricles with such facetious gentlemen as yourself, Sir Arthur?

Sir Arthur. Oh no! not in London, I assure you. Ask the husband after his lady, he stretches, yawns, and cries, she was very well the day before yesterday.—Ask my lady after her husband, she takes out her visiting pocket-book.—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday! oh yes, it was Wednesday that I saw him last! and on Friday I shall perhaps see him again.—*Bon jour*, colonel, we shall meet at the new play:—and this, madam, is a sample of matrimonial life in London, led by all fashionable couples from the Park and St. James's, to the sound of Bow bells.

Sir David. And pray where have you left my Lady Delmar, and her sister?

Olivia. Oh, we left her in the beach-grove reading Xenophon's expedition of Cyrus.

Sir Arthur. Oh, Sir David, you should rouse her energies. She is too much of a recluse; too fond of shady groves and purling streams; they are quite out of taste, quite exploded. We hurry to our rural retreats to taste the fogs of November; and crowd to the metropolis when the leaves bud, to enjoy the beauties of Pall-Mall, Bond-street, and the two Parks; and, to say the truth, I have seen more beauties in those few places than I ever beheld at Vienna, Paris, Petersburgh, Madrid, Naples, Venice, Spa, or Rome.

Sir David. Venusia would be quite vain if she heard you; I fancy you are not quite of Sir Arthur's opinion, Miss Wyndham?

Olivia. Why I cannot say I am. I detest crowds and squeezes of all sorts and kinds.

Sir Arthur. What! not love a rout, Miss Olivia?

Olivia. I can't endure it.

Sir David. Why! may one ask?

Olivia. Perhaps from passing so much of my time with my rural guardian, Mr. Hardacre: however that may be, I am perpetually at a loss in your crowded assemblies, Sir David, and find myself compelled either to say nothing, or else talk nonsense.

Sir Arthur. So much the better, so much the better, my dear Miss Wyndham; most of our fashionable conversationes in London are composed of those who talk nonsense, and nothing but nonsense. We take our degrees, and have our regular professors of the art. We have, for instance, the scandalous nonsense, the slip-slop nonsense, and the philosophical nonsense.

Sir David. How—the philosophical nonsense!

Sir Arthur. Yes, Sir David; nothing can be more simple; the philosophical nonsense merely consists in doubting every thing. Trying to comprehend a system we find we cannot account for—the growth of a flower—what we don't understand we never admit possible—and so begin again, philosophising and philosophising in an agreeable see-saw of continual doubt, and metaphysical uncertainty, till we are able at last to dispute the self evident proposition of our own existence, and this is the true "darkness visible" which modern illuminés would wish to spread over our fashionable horizon.

Enter Lady DELMAR.

Sir David. Emily! what has so long detained you?

Lady Delmar. Oh, my sister Venusia, with one of her classical illustrations as she calls them. I hope you don't feel offended at—

Sir David. Offended, Emily? what a thought!

Lady Delmar. Sir Arthur, my love, has been proposing a kind of naval *fête champêtre* in honour of your nephew Captain Blandford's arrival. I have spoken to La Jeunesse, he tells me a few hundreds will do it; all will be prepared, and La Jeunesse will come to you for the money to-morrow.

Sir David. Confusion! I dare not own my embarrassments, and—[*aside*] well, well, my dear!

Lady Delmar. Have we your consent?

Sir Arthur. Oh I'll answer for Sir David.

Sir David. I fear you must. [*Aside.*

Sir Arthur. Shall I hope the honour of your ladyship's hand at the ball?

Lady Delmar. Fie, Sir Arthur, what would my sister say?

Sir Arthur. Oh, she will never dance, I am sure; Miss Wyndham will perhaps favour me?

Olivia. Oh, by all means, Sir Arthur; we have a

plentiful lack of young men in this part of the world, and as they are equally inanimate automatons, mere wire-moved puppets—one may do just as well as another for a country dance; and for this reason—I have no objection to go down one with you—allons, Sir Arthur. [*Exit* OLIVIA *and Sir* ARTHUR, *with* OLIVIA, *singing*,

Follow me, and I will show
Where the rocks of coral grow.

Lady Delmar. Shall we follow?

Sir David. Shall I avow my situation, explain my difficulties—pride—pride and shame constrain my tongue. [*Aside.*

Lady Delmar. Oh, a-propos, my dear. La Jeunesse tells me, we must cut down the hawthorn, as it will impede the preparation for the fête.

Sir David. I must not, will not have that tree molested; it was planted, when my father lived, by my poor sister.

Lady Delmar. Sister!—have you a sister, then?

Sir David. I had—I had—but unhappy girl—

Lady Delmar. And never mentioned her to me?

Sir David. I wished to banish her my memory for ever. She married a man every way beneath her rank—we abandoned, gave her up—she fled the country, and I fear—

Enter WILLIAMS.

Williams. Captain Blandford's respects, and he is now ready to wait on you, sir.

Sir David. I come. [*Bows, exit.*] Oh, Lady Delmar! amidst all the gaiety with which you have long beheld me surrounded, I have been a prey to feelings which—

Lady Delmar. Pray, droop not thus, my love; few in this world are free from such upbraidings.—If we

could judge ourselves with half the rigour we exert towards others, the self-accusing blush would mantle o'er the cheek of many a rugged moralist, and the angel of pity, dropping a tear upon the catalogue of human failings, would avow, none are themselves so pure, as to deny indulgence to the errors of a fellow-creature. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE—*Sir* DAVID'S *Study.* [*as before.*]

Enter BLANDFORD *dressed in full uniform, with* WILLIAMS.

Williams. My master will be here directly, sir.

Blandford. Nay, let him not hurry: I can anchor here awhile: by the way, now my friend is adorning his person, you may inform me how my little Zelidy goes on—she must be much taller than when I left her last.

Williams. Aye, sir; and she is good as she is beautiful, and beautiful as good—the whole family doat upon her.

Blandford. I rejoice to hear it: you have a great deal of company, I see.

Williams. Our house is never empty, sir—my master—but I hear him coming.

Sir DAVID *enters,* WILLIAMS *bows, retires.*

Sir David. Dear Blandford.

Blandford. After all my perils, kind sir, trust me, I truly rejoice to find myself safe in your hospitable port once more; but you seem a little weather-

beaten: no rough gales, I hope, since you ventured on the dangerous voyage of matrimony?

Sir David. None, George, none; and do you, my young son of Neptune, still hold your resolution against the happy state?

Blandford. Fixed, Sir David. Constant, as the needle to the pole. I've made many a false tack in my life, it must be confessed; but matrimony!—of that quicksand, thank Heaven, I have contrived to steer clear.

Sir David. Nay, be serious. I have urgent reasons for wishing you to be so.

Blandford. Well then, I am—I am serious; and ask me any questions you think proper, I will answer them with all the plain, blunt sincerity, that belongs to my profession.

[*Sir* DAVID *here assumes an air of the most serious earnestness.*]

Sir David. You promise me to be direct in your answer.

Blandford. Try me.

Sir David. What then, George, can be a wiser plan, for a fellow at your time of life, than to marry?

Blandford. To shoot himself.

Sir David. I fear all my hopes are vain. [*Aside.*

Blandford. Look ye, Sir David—Matrimony is your harbour, and I give you joy of it; for my own part I have told you often, and I tell you again and again, it's a voyage I have no mind to—at four and thirty years of age I have four and thirty little whims—and customs—and custom is a second nature. For instance, I have a favourite walk, a favourite book, a favourite chair—in comes a wife—and east, west, north, and south, cannot blow from more different quarters than our inclinations. I am inured to hardship, she pines for delicacies; I love walking, she must have a carriage to loll in; madam dies for the opera, I had rather see a dancing

bear than a dancing coxcomb; she loves foreign music, I am for a sailor's artless ballad; she has the head-ache—grows nervous—enter doctors, apothecaries, salts, phials, cordials and restoratives, fits, faintings, and hysterics;—and so you have the whole log-book of the cruize of matrimony.

Sir David. Were we born to please ourselves alone, such maxims might be encouraged; but in all families where the pride of ancestry is to be supported—sacrifices must be made. Since you saw her last, Miss Wyndham is improved in every virtue, and in every grace. [*Earnestly.*

Blandford. I truly rejoice to hear it; she has been good to my poor Zelidy, whom I left under her care and yours. [*Sir* DAVID *is here abstracted.*

Sir David. It is natural that her thoughts should now be directed to a change of situation. Her fortune is immense. George! I have loved you from infancy. If—I say, if you saw me surrounded by perils, encumbered by difficulties, would—would you not do somewhat to relieve me?

Blandford. The question hurts me. My element is a rough one, I own; but I never saw the sinking enemy to whom I would not stretch a helping hand; the friend who doubts me then affronts my feelings as a man, a sailor, and a christian.

Sir David. My noble boy! this day will I entrust you with a secret which must place my happiness, and what is dearer far than happiness—my honour, in your keeping—meantime regard Miss Wyndham as a lady dear to the interests of your family.

Blandford. If you desire it, she shall find a brother in me.

Sir David. A brother!—and why—why not a—husband? [*With great vehemence.*

Blandford. A husband! [*Recoiling.*

Sir David. Blandford, my only hope remains with you. No more at present; my Lady Delmar waits

impatient to congratulate your return; with her you will find Miss Wyndham.

Blandford. I attend her ladyship.

Sir David. Williams!——[*Enter* WILLIAMS.]—— Conduct the captain to her ladyship.—[*Exit* WILLIAMS.]—And when you see Olivia, think, George, think what I have said; I have cause to imagine the poor girl loves you, and you are bound in honour—

Blandford Not to deceive her. No, uncle, no! The scoundrel that, beneath false colours, captures a weaker vessel than his own, is a robber and a pirate, a villain and a coward. What should I be if, professing to love no woman, I cheated any with a hand without a heart?

Sir David. Hear me, George——

Blandford. No, uncle, try me any way but this. If I wrong a man he calls me to account, and none but a dastard will wound that sex, who have our own sensibilities to feel an injury, though they may not have the same strength to resent it—you will feel my argument, and I trust the decision to your own bosom. [*Exit* BLANDFORD.

Sir David. And that decision must condemn me. Blandford refuses then, and on Sir Arthur all my hope must rest. He has written to the colonel of young Hardacre—and in such terms that if all my projects are not formed to be defeated, he is no longer with his regiment. Have I then added tyranny—oppression—to my failings? But where can that man hope to stop, who once has listened to the dictates of an unfeeling prodigality? [*Exit.*

The Cottage of HARDACRE, *neat and plain.* RECORD *reading:* HARDACRE *at a Table smoking his Pipe.*

Hardacre. Well, Record, have you finished the letter from my boy Philip?

Record. He here informs you that, having quarrelled with his colonel, he has left his regiment.

Hardacre. Right. [*Smokes.*

Record. He is afraid that some concealed enemy has done him this ill turn.

Hardacre. Yes. [*Coolly.*

Record. And that, scanty as he knows your means to be, he is now returning to share them, assured that you would never again admit him to your presence if he stooped to an act of servility.

Hardacre. Right! right! quite right!

Record. And all these ill tidings you hear with the most complete unconcern?

Hardacre. Why should it concern me?

Record. Philip has been bred like a gentleman.

Hardacre. Granted.

Record How is he to support himself now?

Hardacre. Why, like a gentleman.

Record. But how?

Hardacre. By independence.

Record. What independence?

Hardacre. The best—his own exertions.

Record. We are friends!

Hardacre. True.

Record. I suspect foul play has been used.

Hardacre. Um!

Record. Sir David likes you not.

Hardacre. May be so! 'Tis strange to hate a man one never saw.

Record. He is proud.

Hardacre. So am I.

Record. Miss Wyndham's father left you joint guardian with him.

Hardacre. He did.

Record. This hurt his dignity. The will which I have before me ordains that she should pass the summer with you at your cottage, and the winter with Sir David at his house in town.

Hardacre. He had his reasons. Wyndham was

an odd fellow like myself. I knew him from early life.

Record. Indeed!

Hardacre. Poor as I seem, I did; and rendered him a service he has not forgotten:—you ever thought me an oddity—I am so.

Record. Colonel Wyndham was rich—If you served him, how comes it that he left you none of his wealth?

Hardacre. I am an oddity, I tell you; he knew I was so; he knew likewise that the services the heart renders, the heart and not the hand must repay—money can buy many things—but the friend that money can buy is hardly worth the purchasing.

Record. I comprehend:—Colonel Wyndham wished his daughter to pass her time equally between the town and country—because—

Hardacre. Both have their vices—you have hit it; and by seeing them, she might avoid their extremes.

Record. Sir David suspects that you intend your son for Miss Wyndham's husband.

Hardacre. Does he?

Record. I know he does—if you could convince him of your innocence—he would be your friend.

Hardacre. My what? [*Laying down his pipe, and rising with a cool disdain.*]

Record. Your friend.

Hardacre. And what right can Sir David Delmar have to the name of old Philip Hardacre's friend? a name he never wastes on every new comer, who can scrape a tune on a fiddle, or make a leg like a dancing-master—not carelessly given, or wantonly withdrawn—but once pledged with the rough grasp of an honest hand, held firm and fast, till the last struggle of expiring mortality.

Record. How!

Hardacre. For you, Mr. Record, is my attachment firm and real—but your master must deserve my esteem before he can gain my friendship.

Record. Recollect Sir David's interest in the country.

Hardacre. I hope he does his best to serve it, and while life and strength is left me, so will I. In peace I will serve it by my example to my poorer neighbours round me; and in war I will unite my arms to theirs against invading violence. I am Sir David's equal here—I want not his favours. I am loved by those round me—smoke a pipe with the curate—club a joke with the apothecary—talk of pronouns and participles with the school-master—and condemn smuggling with the exciseman—every face in the village meets me with a smile—I want not his friendship.

Enter PHILIP.

Hardacre. My boy!

Philip. Dear, dear father! Mr. Record!

Record. Welcome home, young gentleman.

Philip. Home would indeed be welcome to me, sir—Did I not come to overcharge a father—You received my letter?

Record. Yes; and your father approves.

Philip. Then am I blest. I know not wherefore I have been thus treated: long was I honoured with my commander's confidence; and, proud to hold, endeavoured to preserve it.

Record. His temper perhaps was overbearing.

Philip. Let me do justice to his character: as a soldier, he is an honour to his country and profession; as a man, he is an ornament to the society of which he is a member. He has an eye to discern merit; and under him the meanest private in his ranks has only to deserve, to find protection, friendship, and promotion.

Hardacre. You have been slandered, boy.

Philip. Alas! I fear so, father.

Hardacre. You've not been treated with indignity?

Philip. I stand before my father; that is at once an answer to your question. Had I endured the slightest insult, I would have fled to the earth's extremest verge ere I ventured to a roof where poverty has dwelt, but where disgrace has never dared to enter.

Hardacre. Your hand—your hand—excuse the old man, Record—tears are not constant visitors with me, and when they come I welcome them as strangers and as guests.

Philip. No, father, no—my resignation sprung from chilling apathies, from cold neglects, felt easier than described. They pierced my heart, used to the glow of social friendship; and finding it withdrawn, I come again to my parental roof; my former occupation. Convinced, that though no laurel graces my brow, as I return with an unsullied heart, a father's arms will be, as now I see they are, open to welcome, cheer, and bless me. [*Embrace.*

Record. Your hand—Hardacre, you called me friend. I'll prove so.—I suspect treachery—I'll find it.

Hardacre. Will you?

Record. To be sure I will. I had as soon give in a false account as not do justice to my neighbour's character—yours, young man!

[*Shakes* PHILIP'S *hand heartily, and exit.*

Hardacre. And now, my boy, you must turn the sword to the sickle. Stop! one word—it is suspected that Miss Wyndham—you turn pale—tomorrow she sets out to London, I shall resign my guardianship, and you must—aye, must promise me never to see her more.

Philip. If it is your pleasure. [*Faltering.*

Hardacre. It's my command—Sir David thinks I have encouraged you—Did the proud man know—Well, no matter—Rouse yourself; if you indulge a hope, remember that you wrong Olivia—Your father and—my boy, I know the task is hard—I feel—I feel for you. [*Tenderly.*

Philip. Yes, sir, I will exert myself, and strive to find in labour and activity an antidote to a passion weakly, vainly cherished.

Hardacre. Why, that's well said; we'll toil again together, and affluence shall envy us our occupation; my little lands have been neglected in thy absence; they now again shall smile and flourish—we'll—we'll help the poorer cottagers about us—divide our crust with the needy—administer to the afflicted—divide the burthen with the weary, and make the grateful hamlet bless, and laugh around us.

[*Exeunt affectionately.*

SCENE III.—*Sir* David Delmar's *House.*

The general Apartment.

Zelidy, *drawing at a Table.*

Zelidy. He has forgotten me; I know, I feel he has—He has been with Lady Delmar and Olivia; yet he asks not for me. I have finished my picture—Will it please him? Here is a little vessel agitated by a storm; that will serve as an emblem of poor Zelidy—Here a majestic bark hastening to its relief; that is an emblem of Blandford—And here is Hope smiling upon her anchor; ah! for whom will that serve? Not for Zelidy!

Enter Blandford.

Blandford. What a confounded noise in every part of this mansion! This it is to be married.—Marriage!—qu iet? pretty quiet state, forsooth! the

must be great happiness to be sure, when all these noises of routs, and balls, and *fête champêtres* are necessary to keep the heavy machine in motion: thank Heaven and thy stars, Blandford, thou art teazed with no piping but the piping of the storm; subject to no caprices but the caprices of the elements—Matrimony!—Love!—Away with 'em!—I'll none on't!

Zelidy. [*Starting up.*] 'Tis he! that voice! my grateful heart cannot delude—deceive me! oh, my guardian! my preserver!

[*Bursts into tears, and kneels before him.*

Blandford. Zelidy! why yes—yes, it must: well, if it be so I'm heartily glad to see—[*Kisses her.*]—I feel an odd sensation that—marriage! why the plague should people marry?

Zelidy. My benefactor! my father!

Blandford. Nay, nay, you need not call me father. Sir David is much older than I am, and you may call him father if you please.

Zelidy. Your goodness.—

Blandford. Well, never mind my goodness now; you have not wanted any thing in my absence, I hope—come, don't call me father again—I don't like it.

Zelidy. Brother, then.

Blandford. Yes, that's a little better, and more like the fact. Well, you have been in London—like it, I suppose—dress, equipage, jewels—eh?

Zelidy. Ah, no! ill would it become an orphan, from childhood a dependent on the generous bounties of another, to vie in splendour with the affluent, the prosperous, and the happy.

Blandford. I understand—but take one truth from him who never flattered in his life. The simple pinnace floating down life's tide, with the white pendant of truth and innocence, need never strike its modest flag to any painted gaudy vessel that, decked in gewgaw colours, rides in affected arrogance before it.

Here, here is some worthless ballast, of which it will be kind to lighten me. [*Offers money.*

Zelidy. Ah no! no! no! you hurt, you distress me. I have hitherto received your bounties in silence and without a blush—should they assume a pecuniary form, I could no longer accept them with other sensations than those of sorrow and uneasiness.

Blandford. Rather than so, may every guinea I possess be buried in the ocean where I earned it. I now find that to give is in the power of every stupid fellow—to give properly is a science—and we sailors generally understand the liberal arts much better than the fine ones.

Zelidy. Ah, sir! you have already done too much for Zelidy. My wishes should be humble as my fortunes: my parents are, perhaps, in poverty, in want.

Blandford. Be satisfied, my dear Zelidy, your parents can now need no assistance from you—your father was——

Zelidy. Was—who—speak—oh speak, and I will bless you!—oh yes! doubly bless you. When last we saw you here, I was a child too young to be entrusted with my own sad story—but, when reflection dawned, my busy fancy drew the mournful picture of my parents' sufferings. Memory retraced the image of my father; my mother's person too I never can forget—pale was her cheek, and she would sit and weep—Oh, hear me, bounteous Heaven! thou who didst spread thy sheltering arm in infancy! if yet my parents live—oh guide me, guide me to them! these hands shall toil to aid, these active limbs shall bound with more than youthful vigour to repay the pious debt of gratitude, of feeling, and of nature!

Blandford. Rise, Zelidy—your supplications are no longer to be resisted. Listen to me.

Zelidy. Oh, I am all attention.

Blandford. The ship, which, in the absence of our captain, I fourteen years since commanded, was ordered on an expedition to the place of your nativity. One night, when all was dark and silent except the sullen wave which dashed against the vessel's side, I heard——

Enter QUERY, *curiously coming towards him.*

Query. Aye, my dear fellow, what did you hear?

Blandford. Provoking!

Zelidy. Cruel interruption!

Query. Beg pardon; fear I come a little *mal-a-propos.*

Blandford. Where the deuce have you been loitering?

Query. Couldn't be introduced *en deshabille*, miss.

Zelidy. Sir!

Query. Madam!—is it Miss Zelidy?

[*Aside to* BLANDFORD.

Blandford. No, no.

Query. Miss Venusia?

Blandford. O no!—no, I tell you.

Query. Miss Olivia?

Blandford. No.

Query. Lady Delmar, mayhap? [BLANDFORD *makes a sign to* ZELIDY, *who retires unseen by* QUERY.

Blandford. Why you seem to know the names of the whole family before you have set eyes upon one of them.

Query. Let me alone for that—hate to lose time; while my coiffeur equipped me, got it all out of him. Don't let me neglect the young lady, though:—pray, miss, give me leave to ask—[*turns round.*]—Hey, gone! what could drive her away?

Blandford. Your questions would drive away the very devil himself.

Query. Come, come—now do; do be good-na-

tured, and I won't plague you any more: never ask a single question till supper-time. I say, who do you think is down on a visit here?

Blandford. I know not, I care not.

Query. My old London acquaintance, Sir Arthur Tessel—on a love affair to one of the ladies of this mansion; don't know which—ask him though the first time I see him, since you wish it.

Blandford. Why should I wish it? I've nothing to do with love or marriage.

Query. You remember Sir Arthur's uncle, the Colonel—I've heard you speak of him. Could you introduce me to him? he's a brave fellow, they say.

Blandford. They do him justice then; I know him to be so.

Query. Ask Sir Arthur to introduce me. The Colonel will thank him: know I shall be a favourite—flatter myself few people more so in London. Always do my best to please the good folks there. I've one certain way of being agreeable—have you found it out?

Blandford. Upon my soul, I have not.

Query. No? tell you my secret then: always make myself useful. Any thing lost, I inquire—any reports going abroad, I inquire—any news stirring, I inquire—thus by little and little I gather like a snow-ball; every body is glad to employ me, every body is glad to see me, and useful Ned Query can make his way into a drawing-room nine times out of ten, when a poor poet, a celebrated general, or a man of family is told, not at home, for four and twenty times together.

Blandford. Indeed, then, I'm hearily glad, Ned, that it has been my good fortune to spend so much of my time at sea.

Query. Why so?

Blandford. Because I should be sorry to see noise and impudence admitted to any house where genius,

worth and virtue were kept waiting at the door: but follow me to the ladies, and mind you are upon your good behaviour.

Query. Put pray, did you ever——

Blanaford. Psha— [*Exit.*

Query. Here's treatment; I'll never ask another question as long as I live—never, never, never! [*Servant passes the stage.*] Ah, John, how's your wife?—Dumb—plague take it, people now a days would rather talk of any body's wives than their own. [*Exit.*

SCENE—*The Fête Champêtre.*

A grand Naval Trophy erected in the Middle of the Stage; various Arbours filled with elegant Company, Sir DAVID *and his Party; Sir* ARTHUR *and* OLIVIA *come forward.*

Sir Arthur. Positively, Miss Wyndham, you must preside at this *fête champêtre;* I cannot prevail on your aunt Venusia to do the honours, because she says a *fête champêtre* was a thing unknown to the ancient dames of Greece and Rome. Ha! ha! ha!

Olivia. Yet, Sir Arthur, you can flatter the woman you laugh at; and pray give me leave to ask your motives for a constant attendance on her you are perpetually endeavouring to render ridiculous.

Sir Arthur. Can my motives be unknown to Miss Wyndham, for whom I have deserted dear, dear London, and all its charming ways?—Ah, Miss Wyndham, Miss Wyndham! will you never understand me?

Olivia. Oh yes, Sir Arthur, I understand you too well; I see that your pretended regards to my aunt are so many affronts in disguise.

Sir Arthur. Oh, no! no affront; I do quiz her a little. to be sure; it's a way we have in London.

Olivia. I know it, worthy baronet, I know it. Quiz

is an elegant term, which supplies, in your vain ideas, those superior qualifications you only ridicule because you cannot imitate.

Sir Arthur. Hold! hold! my dear Miss Wyndham; if you put on the armour of Minerva I shall never venture to attack you.

Olivia. Nay, be not afraid, Sir Arthur; a choice spirit like yourself should never be alarmed at any thing. I have observed your whole fraternity in London; have waited hours in patient expectation of their lively sallies, and found them languid when not noisy, saying any thing for the mere purpose of saying any thing, and eager to gain the applauses of coxcombs, empty as themselves, though on such terms as would cover an honest man with confusion, or a delicate woman with blushes.—Oh fie! fie! Sir Arthur! [*Goes up the stage—music.*

Sir Arthur. 'Tis plain she suspects my designs: can I then give her up, with such grace, such vivacity, and such fortune? forbid it, love! Is there any harm in making this antiquated spinster the means of obtaining such a treasure?—none. She watches me closely though.—Let me see how to get rid of her. I have it—the obsequious Mr. Query will stand in good stead. I will introduce him as a scholar and a wit, the good old lady will swallow the bait, he will engross some of her attentions, and thus I hope to make him useful every way.

[QUERY *comes forward.*

Query. Who useful, my dear Sir Arthur?—only make me so, I shall be the happiest fellow in the world.

Sir Arthur. You might now be of the greatest service to me.

Query. As how? you rejoice my heart! as how?

Sir Arthur. Come to our table, I'll tell you my scheme.

Query. Scheme! what scheme?—heard Lady Del-

mar ask for you—darted off like an arrow from a bow—are you a toxopholite?—

Sir Arthur. Psha! we are staid for. [*Retire.*

Enter RECORD.

Record. Here is the temple of dissipation.

Sir David. Now, Record, what news?

Record. The old news, sir, the old visitors.

Sir David. 'Sdeath, have they presumed to venture here?

Record. Yes, sir, and threaten to expose you before all your company, unless——

Sir David. Hush! how much will satisfy their clamours?

Record. Not less than five hundred pounds.

Sir David. Confusion! I borrowed that sum of Miss Wyndham yesterday for a debt of honour; I must again apply to her: for the present take this [*Gives a bank-note*]—silence the harpies. I would not have Lady Delmar know it for a thousand worlds.

Record. And how is Miss Wyndham to be——

Sir David. No matter; do your duty, sir: leave me to——I cannot think——leave me, leave me to ——to-morrow all shall be set to rights.

[*Retires and joins his party.*

Record. My duty! yes, painful as that duty is, it must, it shall be done. Miss Wyndham must not fall a sacrifice to her own goodness. On this note, which I have been requested by Philip to deliver to her, I may pencil a few lines to warn her of her danger. Ha! they rise.

[*Sir* DAVID *and Lady come forward; Sir* ARTHUR *and* QUERY *converse;* BLANDFORD *and* ZELIDY *engaged likewise in conversation: while all are occupied,* RECORD *secretly slips a letter into the hand of* OLIVIA.

Lady Delmar. My dear, you are thoughtful?

Sir David. Oh no! I was absorbed in—no matter —are the dancers ready?

Query. Oh yes, all ready. I have seen to that, Sir David.

Sir David. Let them commence.

Lady Delmar. My dear!

Sir David. Pray see to our friends; I, I will follow.—I like not the attentions of my nephew to this orphan girl; pity, they say, is akin to love: this must be looked to, and——

[*The music here strikes up. Village girls dance, and present* BLANDFORD *with flowers, then return with naval flags, laurels, &c. which they likewise lay at his feet.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Sir* DAVID'S *House.*

Enter Sir ARTHUR, *musing.*

Sir Arthur. Surely, surely, of all plagues with which a man can be tormented, none was ever greater than being trusted with the secrets of a family. Sir David tells me, that spite of the brilliant figure he has so long been making, he is worried to death by the demands of creditors.—Strange! psha! not at all so, the thing is common enough in every circle in London; and were none there to ride in their own carriages but those who have paid for them, we might lounge down Bond-street with as much ease and as little difficulty as we stroll through a churchyard in a country village.

Enter RECORD *with a bundle of bills.*

Record. Sir David informs me, sir, that you have

kindly undertaken to settle with a few gentlemen who are to call here for money this morning.

Sir Arthur. Oh! yes, yes; Sir David tells me these people have very been troublesome, and as I am so soon to have the honour of being nearly related to him, it's my duty to do all I can to set his mind at rest: send them to me, I'll settle them.

Record. If you would encharge me with the money, sir, it would save you much trouble.

Sir Arthur. Money! oh, never mind the money, my dear fellow; with us men of fashion money is neither here nor there. When they call, only let me know, and flattery's the word. You shall hear me praise the colouring of the painter, till instead of payment he begs me to sit for the exhibition; and tickle the wine-merchant over a bottle of his own champagne, till he forgets what he came for, and begs a fresh order with a bow down to the ground. This is the London style of living, my old boy, and without it, we have a number of very dashing fellows who would not know how to live at all.

Record. I am astonished!

Sir Arthur. Are you? that's a sign you know very little of high life, then: any stupid fellow can manage these matters with money, the real art of the business is to settle them without it; only send them to me, and you shall see me put my theory in practice. [*Exit* RECORD.

Sir Arthur. So! when I have accommodated matters with these gentry, I have promised Sir David to call this young Hardacre to an account.—My letter to the Colonel has taken effect, it seems; I hope he did not suspect the writer. Oh! [*taking out a memorandum-book*] here is my young spark's address; I was to drive Miss Wyndham in my curricle to-day; and with all this business on my hands, how shall I contrive to——

Enter QUERY.

Query. My dear Sir Arthur, can I drive the curricle for you? I am a dead good whip.

Sir Arthur. Are you?

Query. Am I! d'ye know Bob Squarewell? he taught me the rules, snug, short, concise—

> The rule of the road is a paradox quite,
> While driving your carriage along;
> If you keep to the *left* you are sure to go *right*,
> And if you go *right* you go *wrong*.

Sir Arthur. Well! that will answer, go and prepare.

Query. I am gone; but stay—Sir Arthur, where do you live in London? you keep a great deal of company?

Sir Arthur. Well, what then?

Query. Ah! if you would but introduce me to some of your parties. I'm a useful fellow; will you? its of no great consequence, only it gives a man an air to have a large acquaintance: will you introduce me some morning to all your fashionable friends?

Sir Arthur. Any thing. Zounds! you'll keep Miss Wyndham waiting.

Query. I am gone, only give me leave to ask one question, do you know the marquis of——

Sir Arthur. 'Sdeath and plagues! ask me any thing when you come back; only go now. [*Retires up.*

Query. I'm gone, noble baronet, I'm gone.

[*Exit* QUERY.

Sir Arthur. Now then for my defiance; my heart upbraids me when I think: think, beware of that Sir Arthur Tessel.—Reflection is the very worst friend a duellist can cherish.

[*During his soliloquy* OLIVIA *appears advancing through the folding doors, so earnestly employed in reading a letter that she does not observe his exit.*

But see, my charming Olivia comes this way. I will instantly dispatch the business of Sir David, and return to her immediately. [*Exit Sir* ARTHUR.

Olivia. Generous Philip! this noble effort for your father adds esteem to pity:—Pity! beware, Olivia. Pity is a dangerous word.—Heigho! [*Looks at the letter.*] What have we here? lines on the back in pencil writing. "Beware, Miss Wyndham! beware of the immense sums Sir David is daily borrowing."—This hint confirms my former suspicions. —Ha! Miss Venusia.

[*Seeing Miss* VENUSIA LAUREL *advancing slowly down the stage, with a book in her hand, her air pensive, solemn, and absorbed.*

Miss Venusia. These pleasures Melancholy give,
And I with thee will choose to live.

Miss Wyndham! jaded to death with that foolish feminine amusement, dancing, I suppose—Cornelia never danced—a mere loco-motive exercise! I marvel my sister, Lady Delmar, has not more taste than to encourage it.

Olivia. It is a harmless diversion at least, my dear madam, promotes society, and brings young people together.

Miss Venusia. Fie, fie, Miss Olivia! You have caught up these notions in the mansion of that visigoth, that Hardacre.

Olivia. Would you then have a young woman totally lay aside the graces that characterise her own sex?

Miss Venusia. The graces!—ridiculous. No, Miss Olivia, no. Even when a child I was admired for the gravity of my looks.

Olivia. Indeed, madam!

Miss Venusia. Aye, indeed. As I grew to riper years, I never consulted the idle variations of fashion; for the last twenty years I have dressed with the same pure simplicity in which you see me now—ever

keeping in my mind the favourite line of my favourite poet—

"Where half the skill is decently to hide."

A cautious maxim, that has been out of date for these six years past.

Olivia. And yet, my dear madam, I have observed that there is nothing in this world of which the men have so great an horror as a learned lady.

Miss Venusia. Mere ignorance, child. Sheer envy and malevolence.

Olivia. A mistake, a mistake—I can assure you; no miser grudges his neighbour a supernumerary shilling with more grumbling reluctance, than a husband envies a wife one single atom of superior intellect.

Miss Venusia. However it may be in the country, amongst ignorant rustics like old Hardacre, it is quite a different case in London, I assure you, miss: for I think you yourself will agree with me in a firm opinion, that in London a woman of genius and talent never yet went unnoticed or unrewarded.

Olivia. You are as partial to London as your admirer Sir Arthur, who will not allow the least shadow of merit to any thing that does not bear the stamp of the metropolis.

Miss Venusia. Sir Arthur is a man of sense, a great admirer of the classics. He likes to hear me read Milton and the poets of old times. Hush! sure I hear his step—will you do me the favour to see my dear?

Olivia. With all my heart, madam; but you must excuse my returning, as I have to prepare myself for an airing in the curricle.

Miss Venusia. Oh, just as you please, Miss Olivia.

[*Exit* OLIVIA.

Miss Venusia. If, as I suspect, Sir Arthur should disclose his long smothered passion, how am I to

behave? My acquirements seem to have made an impression on his friend Mr. Query too, who, he tells me, is one of the most inquiring geniuses of the age. —He comes.

Enter SIR ARTHUR.

Sir Arthur. 'Sdeath! Miss Wyndham gone!—[*Aside.*]—To interrupt Miss Venusia Delmar is an act of sacrilege to the interests of literature—how then am I to sue for forgiveness?

Miss Venusia. The interruptions of some persons are indeed intolerable, but a man like you, who has such an esteem for—

Sir Arthur. What does she mean now? I must humour her this time, however. [*Aside.*] Madam!

Miss Venusia. You, I say, Sir Arthur, never pay a female so ill a compliment, as to be attentive to so ridiculous an exterior as beauty! your present ideas are derived from a different source.

Sir Arthur. By my honour, madam, you do me justice. No, Miss Venusia, beauty is in my eyes a mere chimera: give me the female whose mental graces can charm the imagination and captivate the understanding, as my friend Mr. Query says.

Miss Venusia. Mr. Query makes me proud. The approbation of such a scholar as you say your friend is——

Sir Arthur. Oh! one of the first in the world; the most inquiring genius I ever met with in the whole course of my life.

Miss Venusia. He has promised me the honour of an hour's conversation this morning. Ah! Sir Arthur, how futile are all other entertainments compared with the interchange of intellect.

Sir Arthur. The union of minds.

Miss Venusia. There is no accounting for the vanity of some females, you know, Sir Arthur; however, I must leave you for the present.

Sir Arthur. Oh madam! why so?

Miss Venusia. I must finish my nine and thirtieth book of my poem with satirical notes.

Sir Arthur. I would not for worlds, madam, do literature such an injury as to detain you—besides I see Mr. Query coming this way, and he would interrupt us.

Miss Venusia. For the present—adieu, then, Sir Arthur.

[*Sir* ARTHUR *hands her to the door in centre, she curtseys and goes off.*

Enter QUERY *at the wing.*

Sir Arthur. How Query! not started yet?

Query. The carriage is this moment at the door, and I only come to ask—

Sir Arthur. Zounds!—I can't stay to be asked any thing now—only take care that no accident—

Query. Depend on me, Sir Arthur, never met with an accident in all my life; so careful, that when I took lady Highflyer's little son an airing, kept steady as possible, looked at nothing but the horses' heads for twelve miles together—brought the carriage quite safe home—to be sure Master Highflyer was missing; for being cautious not to frighten him, never once perceived that the little gentleman had popped out on the other side of me. My lady in a great rage when I came back—but no harm done—Master Highflyer returned safe and sound the next morning in the basket of the Windsor coach.

Sir Arthur. A mighty careful fellow, truly, so—it's lucky, now I remember, that you have not set out—my dear Query!

Query. Well.

Sir Arthur. As you say you wish to be useful to me, here is a letter to young Hardacre; you

guess its contents, and shall be my friend in this affair.

Query. Yes, yes, baronet—I do guess its contents, and I will be your friend in the affair—but not by carrying the letter—plague take such officious friends—what are they like?—why—the—the comet full of fire superfluous, heat unnecessary—gazed at by the curious—safest at a distance.

Sir Arthur. Very well, sir—since you refuse me—I must send my letter by—

Query. Any body but Ned Query—I am a strange fellow—I have spent my life in making people laugh—it never hurts me—the more they laugh at me, the better I like it. I love to be useful—i'd sail to Russia—make a voyage to Abyssinia—any thing to be useful—but the medler who runs about to set two fellows cutting each others throats, is not only the most useless, but the most mischievous being on the face of the earth. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—HARDACRE'S *Cottage.*

Enter PHILIP *in his rustic Dress through the Cottage Door in Centre.*

Philip. The day grows late—yet my father returns not: the heavy rustling of the leaves too, seem to foretel a coming storm. Well, let it rage: it can not drown the tempest here. [*Strikes his heart.*] Olivia! beloved Olivia! Hush, presumptuous heart! lie still. Crush these aspiring hopes, be faithful to thy promise given, and sacrifice thy happiness to hers—[*A crash heard at the door of the cottage.*]—What noise is this?—[*A servant enters rapidly.*]—Ha! who are you?

Servant. Oh, sir, make all the haste you can; a gentleman has just overturned a curricle at the

door, and we fear the lady who was in it is severely hurt.

Philip. Where is the gentleman? with his assistance I may——

Servant. He ran off for help directly, sir, bidding me say he hoped you would give the lady the shelter of this house from the storm which is coming on.

Philip. To any human being in distress the shelter of this house was never yet refused—no words, but follow me.

[*They rush out; noise of falling rain, flashes of lightning seen through the cottage window.* PHILIP *and servant re-enter with* OLIVIA, *who is too much agitated to take notice of what is going forwards. They seat her in a chair. Servant retires—and* PHILIP *speaks.*

Madam, may I presume—[*catching her eye.*]—Olivia!

Olivia. Where am I? Sure I should know this house, this——Philip—dear Philip.

[*Approaching him, he averts his face.*

Philip. Where will the malice of my fortune end? To see—to love—and yet be forced to shun her! Olivia! you received my letter?

Olivia. I did: and it has both alarmed and terrified me. You tell me there that we must meet no more. Could Philip be in earnest?

Philip. Honour, justice, humanity—all—all demand the painful sacrifice. Too long already has the baleful presence of an unhappy man clouded your prospects and destroyed your hopes—go—go enjoy the fortune heaven has blessed you with—leave me to my fate.

Olivia. Unkindly said! if you forget your generous acts, 'tis fit that I refresh your memory. When in our childish rambles, arm in arm we climbed yon

precipice, my dizzy sight betrayed my faltering step, when Philip boldly plunged the steep, and saved Olivia at the hazard of his life.

Philip. Forbear! recal not thus the scenes of happy infancy—they make life's landscape darken round me—and memory adds fresh pangs to one so lost—so wretched—and so hopeless—my conscience is as yet unsullied, let me retain that consolation, and——

Olivia. I know your heart is pure, dear Philip—look up then—look proudly up while here Olivia owns her sentiments to thee and all the world—telling the sneering, idle herd of coxcombs, that flutter round her person, she prizes the friendship of one honest, honourable man, before a tribe of those unfeeling rakes, who falsely would be reckoned men of honour.

Enter HARDACRE, *his Pipe in his Mouth; on seeing them, starts—throws it to the Ground, and advances towards them.*

Hardacre. What do I see? Is this your promise, Philip?

Philip. Sir—Sir—I——

Hardacre. You have hurt me. The toil of the day had overpowered me—and you—you have completed it. [*Wiping his brow.*

Philip. I am innocent, sir.

Hardacre. What brings Olivia here then?

Olivia. Hear me, sir.

Philip. Place yourself in my situation, father; tell me then how you would have acted.

Hardacre. In all situations I trust old Hardacre would have acted like an honest man; you know me, Miss Wyndham, you know me. Sir David has insulted me with a suspicion that—he looks down upon the rustic—I am rough, I am plain—but he shall one day know, though the bark of the tree is

rugged, and the top somewhat withered, the root is still sound, and the core as vigorous and as untainted as his own; you—you have grieved me, boy.

Philip. Then am I the most unfortunate as well as the most wretched of men.

Olivia. Hear me, guardian—or if you persist in denying me that title, hear me, friend of my father.

Hardacre. Friend of Wyndham—well—go on—speak.

Olivia. Philip is not to blame—a gentleman broke down our carriage at this door—when he sheltered an unprotected female—indeed—indeed he did not know that female was Olivia.

Hardacre. Is it so?—Philip, forgive me. As your guardian, dear Olivia, I must now resign my right.

Olivia. Dear sir, have I offended?

Hardacre. No, bless thee, no; but I am forced to beg your absence from my house. I am thought to have designs upon your fortune—this I cannot submit to. The poor man's probity is all that he can call his own—and I cannot afford to part with it—it is the harvest of a sixty years of toil; and, thanks to Heaven and my country, there is no man on earth that can prevent my reaping it.

Olivia. The justice of your sentiments have pierced me to the soul. Oh Philip!

Philip. Olivia!

Re-enter Servant.

Servant. Sir Arthur, madam, attends you with my Lady Delmar's chariot.

Olivia. I come—farewell, my guardian—Philip, adieu!

[*To* PHILIP, *who throws himself in a chair, and covers his face with his hands*—OLIVIA *looks at him and rushes out. The servant stays.*

Servant. I had forgot—Sir Arthur desired me to give this letter to young Mr. Hardacre.

Philip. To me?

Servant. To you, sir—if you are the gentleman.

Philip. I am. [*Servant gives him the letter and exit.* PHILIP *is agitated as he reads it.*

Hardacre. The contents affect him—my son! give me that paper.

Philip. Your pardon, sir.

Hardacre. I entreat.

Philip. Excuse me, I——

Hardacre. I command.

Philip. I dare not disobey—but remember the honour of a son is in a father's hands.

[*Gives the letter.*

Hardacre. And where shall it be safer?—where shall the ivy find more firm support than clasping the rough trunk where first it grew? How's this!—a challenge—oppression on oppression!—well, boy!—how do you mean to act?

Philip. I am a soldier, and your son—do you decide.

Hardacre. 'Tis hard—but yet—yes—you shall meet him, Philip. [*He reads the note.*

"Since Sir David's commands have no effect—answer me—though the difference of our ranks makes it a condescension,"——what!—"to put you on a level"—indeed!

Philip. Does he insult our poverty?

Hardacre. No. He insults his country! Whoever breaks the peaceful order of society has no rank in it; he has forfeited his claim: come, come, my Philip—thou art the only prop of my declining day—when in distant climes my other blossom, thy poor sister, perished—when she was lost to me for ever—thou yet remaindst to comfort me—and now—now—[*Grasps his hand and bursts into tears; after a struggle Philip kneels to him.*

Philip. Father! If you would have me shun this fatal meeting, teach me but how I can with honour —a soldier's honour.

Hardacre. [*Firmly raises, then embraces him.*] No! no! That must not be: yet something shall be done. For fourteen years I've shunned Sir David Delmar —this day I'll see him, and all mystery shall end— my selfish feelings shall be sacrificed. Philip, thy hand—woe to the wretch who seeks these bloody trials—a professed duellist is a mildew and a blight upon the fairest works of Heaven—he is a savage bird of prey, and like kites and vultures should be hunted by general consent from that harvest which he was only born to ruin and deface—come, come, my son. [*Exeunt with firm resolution.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Sir* DAVID'S *Study.*

Sir DAVID *and* RECORD—RECORD *has his Book of Accounts.*

Sir David. Again tormented! and am I never to be free from these devouring cormorants?—Is this your vigilance?

Record. You know how often I have told you that it must come to this at last.

Sir David. Well, Mr. Record—it's very, very well, sir.

Record. I can no longer answer the many demands that every hour press in—I have done all I could— and must now beg you to examine my accounts, and take my resignation.

Sir David. 'Tis well, 'tis very well, Mr. Record—

you see me in the toils of misery, and take that opportunity to insult, and to desert me.

Record. Insult! Desert you!—Sir David Delmar, when I do a kind act, I do not wish to talk about it. I have served your family these five and thirty years—I have during that time saved up one thousand pounds—I have this very morning disbursed the last remaining guinea of it among your creditors—if this is either to insult or to desert you, I ask your pardon—Desert you in your need!

Sir David. Then quit me not.

Record. Yes—as your steward this very day. In poverty I would serve you, with all my heart, and all my strength—but pardon me when I respectfully repeat that I will never contribute to the flattering luxury, that ruins while it smiles upon you.

[*Bows and retires.*

Sir David. My hopes are past—my friends desert—my heart upbraids me! Blandford stedfastly refuses the marriage with Olivia, and all my hopes now rest upon Sir Arthur. Still while Miss Wyndham remains in my house, my ruin may be prevented; her fortune may amuse my creditors a while —s'death! what a state is mine! obligation on obligation!

Enter Miss WYNDHAM.

Olivia. I come, Sir David, before I set out, to return my grateful thanks for the many civilities I have received, both from yourself and Lady Delmar.

Sir David. Set out!—Miss Wyndham!—are—are you then going to leave us?

Olivia. I informed you, sir, last week, that I had a visit to pay to—

Sir David. To Philip Hardacre, perhaps.

[*Bitterly.*

Olivia. Sir?

Sir David. Your father, madam, thought proper to make me an associate with this Mr.—Mr. Hardacre—a name I never thought to have seen conjoined with mine even in a writing.

Olivia. Mr. Hardacre, sir, was my late father's friend, and he has acted towards me with a noble integrity that must ever claim my gratitude.

Sir David. Her words upbraid me!—[*Aside.*]—Miss Wyndham, I have a request to make.

Olivia. Sir, if in my power— [*Hesitating.*

Sir David. It is; a few days cannot possibly incommode your plans: grant me the favour of remaining one week more with Lady Delmar.

Olivia. I will deal candidly with you, sir; young and thoughtless as I may appear, I have long observed you struggling with pecuniary difficulties—nay, be not angry—hear me with patience. When at age, my fortune will be at my own disposal; and if that fortune can be the means of restoring the lost comforts of an amiable woman, or a misguided man, I shall think it has wandered to me as a providential gift from heaven, and hail it as the smiling herald of the purest earthly happiness.

Sir David. You have touched, affected me. Of this hereafter: you consent then to remain one week?

Olivia. If that will contribute to your peace, I do.

Sir David. It will most seriously; two things more; not a word of your suspicions to my lady—let me next hope that you will think no farther of this Philip—this—

Olivia. On that subject I must entreat you to excuse me.

Sir David. By your father's will, my consent is requisite to your marriage; and though this artful rustic, under the specious semblance of blunt honesty——

Olivia. Again—again you allow your reason to be blinded by your prejudice; permit me to retire. Reflect, dear sir, on that which I have said: and think me not intrusive when I add, that in keeping your embarrassments a secret from Lady Delmar, you wrong yourself and her. Believe me, when I assure you, that she who has shared the splendour of your fortunes will esteem it an ill compliment to be held incapable of supporting your trials of adversity, or of partaking the sorrows of your bosom. [*Exit* OLIVIA.

Sir David. Again, again perplexed, defeated, and confounded. 'Tis plain she loves this Philip, then! she owned it not, 'tis true, but she did not deny it —my affairs draw to a crisis—all doubts must end this night. Ha, Zelidy!

ZELIDY *enters.*

Zelidy. Your pardon, if I intrude, but—

Sir David. Another bar to all my projects: but for her Blandford might have entered into my schemes. [*Aside.*

Zelidy. I thought Captain Blandford had been here, sir; he has something to communicate that—

Sir David. 'Tis plain—'tis plain, and every hope is wrecked—yet do not think, rash girl—what am I about to say? my feelings all grow callous, and I have reached the last step of the ladder of oppression, by outraging the sensibilities of an orphan and a woman. [*Aside.*

Enter BLANDFORD.

Blandford. Sir—you look disturbed—you tremble—can I do any thing to aid, assist, or——

Sir David. You once might have done so, George, but now it is too late. [*Wildly.*

Zelidy. Oh, heavens!

Sir David. Excuse me, George! something has

happened, which has ruffled my disposition—let me see you in the course of an hour, when I shall have something to communicate of the greatest consequence. Now then the die is cast—irrevocably. [*Aside and exit.*

Zelidy. What can he mean? he alarms—he terrifies me.

Blandford. Fear not, dear Zelidy, you shall never want a protector.

Zelidy. Why did you bring me from the cottage of poor Ellen? there infancy was past in placid, gentle joys.

Blandford. That Ellen was my mother's trusted friend. Exposed to a dangerous profession, my uncle was the only living being to whom, before my last voyage, I could entrust you. This night all shall be explained.

Zelidy. But—

Blandford. Nay, Zelidy, I pledge my word—my uncle's looks alarm me—watch him, I conjure you; and should any thing occur, speak to my friend Query, and he will immediately bring you to me at the cottage of old Hardacre: the servants will direct you—leave me now, dear Zelidy, as I expect Sir Arthur every moment upon business of importance.

Zelidy. I will not then detain you—adieu, my benefactor—wherever you may go, may Heaven protect and bless you.

[*Affectionately kisses his hand, and exit.*

Blandford. Now then for the baronet. The letter to the Colonel, then, was his. Record, I fear, is right in his suspicions. At all events this brave young soldier shall not meet him—no—though I run the risk myself: an aged parent depends on Philip's assistance: but I—what am I? nobody cares for me—nobody? yes, poor Zelidy; she esteems and loves me—and I love her, and—Love! what have I to do with love? I have forsworn it—if Zelidy was

to marry another, would it concern me?—not a whit—I would go to sea again, and hope—that the first bullet might—Zounds! this looks plaguy like love too—Psha! I'll have nothing to do with it—it's a dangerous enemy, and there's honour in conquering it—so I'll see Sir Arthur—set poor old Hardacre's heart at rest—and then, and then haste back to Zelidy as fast as my heels will carry me—love!—nonsense! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—HARDACRE'S *Cottage.*

HARDACRE, RECORD—RECORD *with Writings and a Casket in his Hand.*

Hardacre. Thus, Mr. Record, have I fully told you all my purposes.

Record. I trust you never will repent your confidence.

Hardacre. For that, old honesty, I will be sworn. Sir David and I at last must meet. You have examined those papers and the casket I intrusted to your care.—You are a man of business, and can inform me whether they are correct.

Record. Nothing can be more so. I shall see the casket, and return your papers, wishing you a prosperous issue to your hopes.

Hardacre. That must be left to time: the husbandman may sow the grain, but 'tis not allotted to man to answer for its growth.

Record. At my request Captain Blandford wrote to Philip's colonel—he has received an answer with the slanderous note inclosed—I know the hand—I'll swear it is Sir Arthur's—it insinuates that Philip had spoken disrespectfully of his colonel.

Hardacre. And this Sir Arthur Tessel did at Sir David's suggestion—

Record. Even so—the young gentleman's attach-

ment to the sister was all a feint—Olivia was his aim—to gain her he would have complied with any request her guardian could have made—but Blandford has thus put the black scrawl into my hands—I place it in yours—take it—and may it confound its author.

Hardacre. It shall—be sure of that—shame on such cowardly practices. The plunderer that robs my farm, pleads want as his excuse—but the midnight incendiary that wantonly fires my corn-field in the dark has all the guilt of the thief to create my contempt, without the pretence of temptation to justify my compassion. By Blandford's opinion we will stand or fall—he is a noble fellow, and will come, you say.

Record. I expect him every moment—oh, I had forgot to tell you—I have left Sir David.

Hardacre. Will you share my purse?

Record. Excuse me, I am an oddity as well as yourself.

Hardacre. I know you are.

Record. When you barely do an act of justice, would you choose to be paid for it?

Hardacre. No.

Record. No more do I; judge of your neighbour by yourself—a knock—it is the captain—Farewell, for a time. [*Exit* RECORD.

Hardacre. Now let any one dare to say, that there is no friendship, no honesty in this world—I answer it is false, there is abundance to be found for those who choose to seek for them: a few tares will start up in the finest soil; but none but a fool would burn a whole field because a weed or two has grown among the crop.

Enter BLANDFORD.

Your servant, sir; will you be seated?

Blandford. Nay, nay, honest farmer—no cere-

mony, that is out of the line of either of us; at my old friend Record's request, I have written to Colonel Tessel. I have likewise seen Sir Arthur, and shewn him his uncle's letter. I told him all I thought upon the subject, confounded, shamed, convinced; and am proud to be the bearer of his ample apology to you, and to your son.

Hardacre. And how is Philip now to act?

Blandford. As I would do; accept the offered hand of his enemy, and feel prouder of having convinced one man by the rational appeal of mercy, than to have punished an hundred by the argument of brutal violence.

Hardacre. Sir, your voice decides it: you interest me much, one doubt alone—excuse me—but Miss Wyndham informs me you have for many years had a young lady under your protection.

Blandford. Hold, my good friend; this is a point on which I have refused to answer the interrogatories of my dearest relatives—they have indulged my humour, and a stranger will surely do me the same favour.

Hardacre. I was wrong, and ask your pardon—we all have secrets.—Captain Blandford, I shall soon leave this country—should your fortunes not chance to be equal to your merits—I am a plain man—but write to Mr. Osborne, at St. Domingo, and you shall never want a friend.

Blandford. [*Starting.*] At St. Domingo, did you say?—Excuse me, sir—but you interest me deeply; and the young person you have just named may have cause to bless you.

Hardacre. Her blessing would console me. I have known happier days. I will hide nothing from you. In an insurrection of our colony I was summoned some miles off in order to defend our property—my son was young, but he marched chearily by my side—my wife, the best that ever blessed the

hope of man—had died about that time—excuse—excuse me— [*Weeps.*

Blandford. Proceed, I conjure you.

Hardacre. On our return all was a scene of terror—the insurrection had raged in our absence—my faithful servants had all fallen in the defence of my lands—and my poor child—was—was heard no more of—she—she—Oh heart! [*In anguish.*

Blandford. Take comfort, sir—she lives.

Hardacre. Lives! lives! it cannot—Oh yes! yes! yes! you are too good to mock me.

Blandford. Nay, be firm, and listen.

Hardacre. I will endeavour, sir, to—Lives! Oh mercy!

Blandford. About fourteen years since—

Hardacre. [*Clasping his hands.*] The time, the very time!

Blandford. The ship in which I served was stationed for a while at St. Domingo. One night we saw the town in flames, and heard the shrieks of violence and murder—we ordered out the boat—our men were few—but they were Englishmen.

Hardacre. Still—still—my girl—my child.

Blandford. We gained the land, and found a large plantation blazing—then a scene of carnage I shudder to remember—a desperate savage ran with an infant shrieking in his arms—her cries struck on my ear—I flew like lightning, with one hand snatched the baby from his grasp, and with the other felled him to the ground.

Hardacre. Oh!—oh!—

[*Grasping his hand, and choaked with his emotions.*

Blandford. I bore her to the ship, which was next morning to set sail for England; the insurrection raged—nor could I trust my little charge on shore—I was a stranger there.

Hardacre. You brought her home?

Blandford. I did; and tried in vain all means to

find her friends—no one in St. Domingo answered my enquiry.

Hardacre. Alas! it must be so. Thinking her dead, I changed my name, and came, unknown to every one, to this my native land—Wyndham, my only living friend, was privy to the secret—he died and kept it—the infant you have reared with so much care is mine—I have so long been near her, then, yet my old heart never once whispered——

ZELIDY *speaks without.*

Zelidy. I must see Captain Blandford.—[*She enters.*]—Oh hasten to Sir David's—all there is a scene of terror; I flew to tell you, my dear—dear protector, that—[HARDACRE *here gazes on her.*]—why does this gentleman so earnestly regard me?

Blandford. Now—now, sir, summon all the fortitude—all the resolution of a man.

Hardacre. How mean you that—young lady!—Blandford! tell me—is it?—[BLANDFORD *affirms.*]—I cannot be deceived—fly to these weak old arms, my long lost—darling child.

Zelidy. Child did he say? Oh yes! I feel—I know him—I remember him—Father! Oh father!—

[*Rushes to embrace him.*

Hardacre. Mr. Blandford—Sir—Thanks, blessings——

[*Tries to speak—sinks down embracing the knee of* BLANDFORD—ZELIDY *kneels on the other side of her protector—and the Act ends.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—OLIVIA'S *Chamber in Sir* DAVID'S *House.*

A Lute and Music on the Table.

OLIVIA, *seated in a pensive Posture.*

Olivia. I cannot read, I cannot play; music has lost its magic influence: why was I born an heiress? what have I gained by fortune? the confession of Sir Arthur, ere he left this house, too clearly proves, that it is only destined to expose me to the mercenary designs of mercenary men: world, world, I'm weary of thee! How do I regret the simple cottage of my rural guardian! when it was thought no harm of me to think of Philip; to sing to him his favourite ballad—ha! [*takes up a song*] here it is—yes, I will try if yet I can remember it.

[*Sings an artless ballad.*—PHILIP *enters in his uniform, towards the conclusion.*

SONG.

Little Cupid, one day, o'er a myrtle bough stray'd,
Among the sweet blossoms he wantonly play'd,
Plucking many a thorn, 'mid the buds of the tree,
He felt that his finger was stung by a bee.
Little Cupid then whimpered; he sobb'd and he sigh'd,
Then ran to his mother, and pettishly cry'd,
" Ah Venus! dear mother! I'm wounded, you see,
And I ask for revenge on the mischievous bee."
His mother then laugh'd at the story he told,
O'er his forehead of snow strok'd his ringlets of gold,
" Now, when you wound another, my lad," answered she,
" Ere your arrows are pointed, you'll think on the bee;

A lesson of love let the story impart,
Ere the beam of the eye light the flame of the heart.
Ye fair ones, remember, while yet ye are free,
That the rose holds the thorn, but the myrtle the bee."

Philip. Olivia.

Olivia. Heavens, you here! how you have frightened me! and does your father—

Philip. Be not alarmed; I wait on you by his command, to inform you, that in a few hours an execution will be in this house, and to remove you to his own, should you think proper.

Olivia. And is my guardian still so kind, then?

Philip. Under these circumstances, he holds it an imperious act of duty. You wonder at my present appearance: know then, dear Olivia, Sir Arthur Tessel, at the instigation of Sir David, sent me that sort of appeal, no man of honour can refuse.

Olivia. At the instigation of Sir David? unhappy man!

Philip. Even so; my opponent affected to doubt whether he could meet me upon equal terms; I therefore resumed this garb, to set his mind at rest upon that subject; since whoever appears as a soldier, must appear as a gentleman.

Olivia. Oh, heavens! and have you met?

Philip. We have; when instead of a pistol he tendered an apology; gave me a letter for Sir David, another for his sister-in law, and then immediately set out for London.

Olivia. And your father?

Philip. Of him I have much to tell you. I must now fulfil my commissions, if you will then leave this house—

Olivia. Not till I have first rendered every assistance to poor Lady Delmar. Whatever her husband's errors may have been, her misfortunes are unmerited. She shall share my home—for of what

value can fortune be to me, except when it offers these golden opportunities of comforting the wretched. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Miss VENUSIA, *opposite side to which they exit.*

Miss Venusia. It must be so. Sir Arthur will soon come to the critical question. Yes, Miss Olivia shall soon perceive that the spear of Minerva may sometimes inflict as deep a wound as the arrows of Cupid.

Enter Maid.

Maid. Mr. Query, madam.

Miss Venusia. Bless me, the great scholar—I must put on my best appearance—a man of his critical sagacity will give a piercing glance, even at first sight—Dorothea; reach me down the Pursuits of Literature—So, now you may go.

[*She shews in* QUERY.

Query. Sir Arthur was right—she does regard me with an eye of favour [*aside.*] Happy at this opportunity of being introduced to a lady of whom the world talks so highly.

Miss Venusia. Such elegant praises from a man of your celebrity must be ever flattering—the little I have done to oblige the world, the opinion of such a judge must amply overpay.

Query. Oblige the world? judge? what does that mean? [*aside.*] Pray, ma'am, is there any thing new? any thing stirring?

Miss Venusia. No, sir, a mere dearth in the literary hemisphere; few people, now a days, are of your inquisitive turn of mind.

Query. Inquisitive! oh, she's found me out, Blandford has betrayed me; and I shall never be able to make myself useful here.—I see that. [*Aside.*

Miss Venusia. You are silent, sir; most of our modern wise men are so: they say but little, but

they think more. Happy would it be for the world if all like us spoke in their works alone.

Query. Works? yes, madam, yes. I am a great admirer of works: pray what may yours be?

Miss Venusia. Oh, mere private ones, I assure you; but my motives are the best, and the end is for posterity.

Query. Indeed, madam! and if I may be so bold, what may be your favourite work?

Miss Venusia. The Pleasures of Imagination.

Query. Really! an odd amusement for a lady at her time of her life. [*Aside.*

Miss Venusia. Though, I dare say, you prefer the Pleasures of Hope?

Query. A broad hint, that; I see I am a favourite. [*Aside.*

Miss Venusia. You must indulge me by consulting your taste: pray, then, do you give the preference to the Rise and Progress, or to the Decline and Fall?

Query. [*Bowing.*] To the Decline and Fall, by all means, madam, out of compliment to you.

Miss Venusia. I am happy to find that we amalgamate so well; your inquiries must have been unceasing.

Query. Some of my friends tell me a little too much so, madam.

Miss Venusia. Ignorant souls! no man can inquire too much.

Query. A sensible woman!

Miss Venusia. You have the Pursuits, no doubt?

Query. Never without them. She and I have changed characters, I think; she's plaguy inquisitive. [*Aside.*

Miss Venusia. Any thing you admire must be excellent; and when you come to London, I hope you will make one of my celebrated society. I assure you I have people of the highest eminence

at my club; we have the most delightful entertainment, the very first characters in the land—lords, doctors, generals, and reviewers.

Query. The reviewing generals, you mean, perhaps, madam?

Miss Venusia. Exactly so; opinions are discussed, merits adjudged, and many who little suspect it find their bad works most curiously carved, I promise you.

Query. Carved!

Miss Venusia. Cut up, root and branch.

Query. And if they cut up bad works, I suppose they are equally ready to encourage good ones; and if any bad works spread abroad, likely to do injury to man, woman, or child, your reviewing generals have my free consent to cut and lop away while they can hold a weapon in their hands; such works are as gangrenes on the bodies of good taste and good sense, and none but fools or knaves can complain of the operation.

Enter PHILIP.

Philip. I beg pardon, madam, but Sir Arthur Tessel requested me to deliver this letter into your hands alone. [*Gives a letter.*

Miss Venusia. Alone, sir!

Philip. Alone, madam; I have executed my commission, and now respectfully take leave. [*Exit.*

Miss Venusia. A very extraordinary youth, well-looking and retiring, and possesses the ancient quality of modesty—a rare gem, which has been lost among many other valuable antiquities for several centuries past. But now for my letter—it must be the declaration—a truly classical hand—the characters bear a strong similitude to the Grecian.

Query. Oh yes, madam, it's quite the thing; the writing of most ladies and gentlemen in modern days is very like the Greek.—Perhaps you mayn't

have your spectacles about you, madam—pray allow me to decypher—always proud to be useful.
[*Reads.*

"Madam,

"Ere this letter arrives, I shall have quitted this house, and shall most probably never see you more.

Miss Venusia. What! [QUERY *reading.*

"From motives of the worst nature, I have long been both trifling with and imposing on you. The only reparation I can make is, to fly a spot where every thing reproaches—the guilty but penitent Arthur Tessel."

Miss Venusia. The base man! but I will rise superior to my fall! I will expose him—I will publish my life—and you, learned sir—you shall be my biographer.

Query. Why, look ye, madam, to serve and please has ever been the business of my life, and if my exertions sometimes happen to fall short of my intentions, I argue thus—what was my motive? good-nature—my fear? censure—who wishes success? every body—who can command it? nobody—what was my plea? necessity—my excuse? friendship—I promise to do my best—no man on earth can promise more, so, madam, have with you. [*Hands her in.*

SCENE II.—*The general Room, which must have a folding Door in its Centre.*

Lady DELMAR *and* WILLIAMS.

Lady Delmar. What do you tell me? a chaise ordered? hurry and confusion in his looks?

Williams. Too true, indeed, madam—my master desired me to order the horses to be put to immediately.

Lady Delmar. Fly to him instantly, I intreat you: tell him, I intreat, I supplicate a moment's audience.

[*Exit* WILLIAMS.] No, generous Olivia!—I am grateful for your noble offer, but a commanding duty now requires my presence here.

Enter SIR DAVID.

Sir David. Emily!

Lady Delmar. My love!

Sir David. I have not deserved that name—Oh, Emily! victim of false pride, I have ruined thee and all thy flattering train of smiling hopes. The sister I deserted is avenged! Her husband now may triumph, but that's my least of pangs; for thee, for thee I feel!

Lady Delmar. For me! my husband, rouse, exert your energies—speak comfort to your heart.

Sir David. Where shall I hope to find it? Driven from my native land, a prey to folly, shame, remorse, and guilt—where shall I fly for refuge?

Lady Delmar. To these arms.

Sir David. Such blessings I deserve not. No, no, my wife—the generous Olivia has consented to receive, to cherish you—with her forget my follies and my sorrows.

Lady Delmar. Hear me, my husband; when we wedded first, joy strewed our path with flowers. My happiness, my pleasures were your cares—you could not see your wife outshone by others of her sex—for her you struggled, and for her you fell—you knew me not—now put me to the proof—go where you will—I'll never, never quit you—I will divide your sorrows, chase your cares, wipe off the upbraiding tear of anguish from your cheek, and be, what every faithful wife has sworn to prove—your servant, guide, your counsellor, and friend.

[*Embracing him.*

Sir David. Friend of my bosom—hide thee ever there! Prepare thee, then; an hour will bring the carriage that bears me off from England, and a prison—

What will become of thee?—remain, my Emily!—I cannot bear the thought—in foreign lands a fugitive—a wanderer.

Lady Delmar. No earthly power can change my resolution—doubt not my fortitude or faith. Enriched by a husband's affection, what woman can be poor? possessed of a husband's heart, what wife can want a home? [*Exit Lady* DELMAR.

Sir David. How have I trifled with each blessing life afforded! Still, still, the carriage comes not—it must be near the hour—Hark! I hear it.

Enter WILLIAMS.

Williams. The chariot, sir.

Sir David. 'Tis well; acquaint your lady, and say I earnestly intreat her utmost speed. [*Exit* WILLIAMS.] Ha! who comes here? Some creditor—unlucky! now.

Enter HARDACRE.

Friend, your pleasure?

Hardacre. Excuse me, sir, I have taken the liberty of arresting the horses at the door, while I say a few words to you.

Sir David. Arrest my horses! The measure was a strong one, but I presume you knew your power, and have thought proper to exert it.

Hardacre. My power!

Sir David. There are doubtless some accounts between us, you wish immediately to be settled—I confess—I confess my inability—so use your pleasure.

Hardacre. Yes, Sir David Delmar, there are some accounts between us, which must immediately be settled.

Sir David. I have told you, sir, it is out of my power.

Hardacre. Excuse me, give me a patient hearing, and you will find that it is in your power, if it is in

your inclination, to strike the balance of every difference between us.

Sir David. Speed, sir, is necessary; pray be seated. [*They sit.*

Hardacre. As I am but a bad orator, I shall merely state a plain story.

Sir David. Well, sir.

Hardacre. Many years ago, a man of consequence in this part of the world left his eldest son with a title, an encumbered estate, and an only sister to protect.

Sir David. Proceed.

Hardacre. The young man being then absent on his travels, the sister formed an attachment to a neighbouring yeoman's son. He had saved her from the fury of an intoxicated ruffian. Gratitude struck root in her heart, blossomed, and the fruit was love: the brother's pride on his return was wounded, he abandoned the newly married couple, and never would admit them to his presence.

Sir David. He acted rightly—though you may despise rank.

Hardacre. You wrong me—I respect it—I consider the nobility of my country as the lordly trees of the forest, engrafted there to shelter all the humbler shrubs around them. But to my tale—abandoned by their brother they sought a foreign land, where two young cherubs crowned their happiness—the climate carried off the wife, who dying in her husband's arms, implored upon her brother's head—

Sir David. What? her maledictions? [*Shuddering.*

Hardacre. Oh no, no, her blessing and forgiveness.

Sir David. Oh memory—Oh poor Cecilia! [*Aside.*

Hardacre. The husband mourned her virtues o'er her grave.—His daughter's loss ensued—with wealth immense, converted into jewels, he returned to England, to sow the seeds of virtue in the mind of his

remaining child—he bred him in adversity's rude school, a school that learns him to feel for others, a lesson of more value than all that pampered luxury can teach the dissipated sons of idleness and folly.

Sir David. Your words upbraid me, sir.

Hardacre. Nay, mark the end. Much has my boy endured the treasure of an honest name traduced, his father scorned and hated (though unknown) by him he wished to serve and love; oppression on oppression, slander upon slander, roused his resentment for a while; but when he saw the aggressor beat to the ground like a fallen tree, he sought his dwelling—resolved to make his story known, and gratify the only vengeance an honest mind can harbour, the severe revenge of—doing good for evil.

Sir David. Osborne!

Osborne. Osborne! the farmer Osborne, in Record's hands placed sums which have retrieved your debts—discharged your creditors—restored you to your rights, and now, Sir David, the balance is struck, and our accounts are settled.

[*While this speech is going on, Lady* DELMAR *and* OLIVIA *advance through the centre door.*

Sir David. My benefactor! Oh, my wife—thank, thank your preserver. [PHILIP *enters.*

Hardacre. Madam, his friend—I wish no other title. Philip, my boy, we need but little; what remains of my wealth shall be the grateful but inadequate reward of him who saved my darling dear Cecilia.

Sir David. For Philip's virtue one recompence remains, Olivia—you understand me, and are above all narrow vanity.

Philip. If, dear Olivia—

Lady Delmar. Nay, no denial. [*Joins their hands.*

Osborne. Bless ye both.

Enter BLANDFORD.

Philip. Behold the man to whom we owe our happiness.

Osborne. How—how shall we reward him?

Blandford. The reward is easy, sir.—It may seem a little odd, uncle, but I have lately found reason for altering some of my opinions.

Sir David. I guess'd as much.

Blandford. I once held the marriage state incompatible with the duties of my profession. I am now convinced to the contrary: the dearer the objects for whom we contend, the more ardent our exertions—nothing can be so dear to a man as the wife of his heart; and the armies and navies which are filled with husbands and with parents form the surest and most effective bulwarks of a country. Zelidy! you once called me father—I must now resign that title, but there still remains another which——

Osborne. Which her heart confirms; I have it from her own lips—there—[*Gives her to* BLANDFORD.] Thus prosperous in the happiness of those dearest to my heart, the occupations of my farm again require my presence.

Zelidy. Nay, dear father!

Olivia. You shall not leave us.

Osborne. Oh bless you, bless you, girls—you shall see enough of me, I warrant you [*Taking one in each hand.*] The old man shall pay his annual visit, and as he waters the little shrubbery growing up around him with the tears of fond affection, pray that they may grow with all the virtues of their mothers, and all the vigorous bravery of their fathers. The harvest of my toil at last is ripe, but I can never hope to gather it, unless our friends will lend their hands and help to bring it in.

WHICH IS THE MAN?

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

BY MRS. COWLEY.

CHARACTERS.

Lord SPARKLE,	*Mr Lee Lewis.*
FITZHERBERT,	*Mr Henderson.*
BEAUCHAMP,	*Mr Lewis.*
BELVILLE,	*Mr Wroughton.*
PENDRAGON,	*Mr Quick.*
Lady BELL BLOOMER,	*Miss Younge.*
JULIA,	*Miss Satchell.*
SOPHY PENDRAGON,	*Mrs Mattocks.*
CLARINDA,	*Mrs Morton.*
KITTY,	*Mrs Wilson.*
TIFFANY,	*Mrs Davenett.*
Mrs JOHNSON,	*Miss Platt.*
Ladies,	*Miss Stewart, Mrs Poussin, &c.*
Gentlemen,	*Mr Booth, Mr. Robson, &c.*

Servants to Lord SPARKLE, BELVILLE, *Lady* BELL, *&c.*

WHICH IS THE MAN?

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Drawing-room.*

Mrs. JOHNSON *crosses the Stage, a Boy following.*

Mrs. Johns. HERE, Betty, Dick! Where are ye? Don't you see my Lord Sparkle's carriage?—I shall have my lodgers disturbed with their thundering.—What, in the name of wonder, can bring him here at this time in the morning?——Here he comes, looking like a rake as he is!

Enter Lord SPARKLE, *yawning.*

Spark. Bid 'em turn; I sha'n't stay a moment.—So, Mrs. Johnson, I pull'd the string just to see how your Sylvans go on.

Mrs. Johns. As usual, my lord; but, bless me! how early your lordship is!

Spark. How late, you mean.—I have not been in bed since yesterday at one!—I am going home now to rest for an hour or two, and then to the drawing-room.—But what are the two rustics about? I have

not been plagued with them these three or four days.

Mrs. Johns. They are now out.

Spark. I suppos'd that, or I should not have call'd.——But, prithee, do they talk of returning to their native woods again?

Mrs. Johns. Oh no, sir!—The young gentleman seems to have very different ideas: Miss, too, has great spirits, though she seems now and then at a loss what to do with herself.

Spark. Do with herself! Why don't you persuade her to go back to Cornwall? You should tell 'em what a vile place London is, full of snares, and debaucheries, and witchcrafts.—You don't preach to 'em, Johnson.

Mrs. Johns. Indeed I do, my lord; and their constant answer is, "Oh, Lord Sparkle is our friend: Lord Sparkle would take it amiss if we should go; 'twould look like distrusting his lordship."

Spark. Was ever man so hamper'd!—Two fools! to mistake common forms and civilities for attachments.

Mrs. Johns. I fear, my lord, towards the young lady something more than forms——

Spark. [*Interrupting.*] Never, upon my honour!—I kissed her; so I did all the women in the parish—the septennial ceremony. The brother I us'd to drink vile port with, listen to his village-stories, call his vulgarity wit, and his impudence spirit; was not that fatigue and mortification enough, but I must be bored with 'em here in town?

Mrs. Johns. But Miss, Sir, talks of pressing invitations, and letters, and——

Spark. Things of course; they had influence, and got me the borough. I, in return, said she was the most charming girl in the world; that I adored her; and some few things that every body says on such occasions, and nobody thinks of.

Mrs. Johns. But it appears that Miss did think—

Spark. Yes, 'faith: and on my writing a civil note that I should be happy to see them in town, &c.—which I meant to have suspended our acquaintance till the general election—they took me at my word; and before I thought the letter had reach'd 'em, they were in my house, all joy and congratulation. I didn't chuse to be encumber'd with 'em, so placed 'em with you. The boy was at first amusing, but our circles have had him, and I must be rid of him.

Mrs. Johns. I must say, I wish I was quit of them at present; for my constant lodger, Mr. Belville, came to town last night, and he wants this drawing-room to himself: he's obliged to share it now with Mr. Pendragon and his sister.

Spark. Hey! Belville!—'Gad, that's lucky! There is not a fellow in town better receiv'd by the women.—Throw the girl in his way, and get quit of her at once.

Mrs. Johns. If you mean dishonestly, my lord, you have mistaken your person: I did not live so many years with your mother to be capable of such a thing.—Ah, my lord, if my lady were living——

Spark. She would scold to little purpose,—and you may spare yourself the trouble.——I tell you, I care nothing about the girl: I merely want to get rid of her, and you must assist me.—[*Mrs.* JOHNSON *turns from him with disgust.*]——Hey-day! the nicety of your ladyship's honour is piqued! Ha! ha! ha!—the mistress of a lodging-house!—*Bien drole*—Ha! ha! ha! [*Exit Mrs.* JOHNSON.

But who is this hobbling up stairs?—Ha! old Cato the censor, my honourable cousin?—What the devil shall I do?—No avoiding him, however.—

Enter Mr. FITZHERBERT.

I wish I had been out of the house, Fitzherbert, be-

fore you appeared! I know I shall not escape without some abuse.

Fitz. I never throw away reproof where there are no hopes of amendment—your lordship is safe.

Spark. Am I to take that for wit?

Fitz. No; for then, I fear, you would not understand it.

Spark. Positively, you must give me more of the felicity of your conversation: I want you to teach me some of that happy ease which you possess in your rudeness; 'twould be to me an acquisition. I am eternally getting into the most horrid scrapes, merely by politeness and good-breeding.—Here are two persons now in this house, for instance——

Fitz. [*Interrupting.*] Who do not know, that the language of what you call politeness differs from that of truth and honour.—You see I know those to whom you allude.—But we only lose time!—Good day, my lord!

Spark. Lose time! Ha! ha! ha!—Why, of what value can time be to you? the greatest enemy you have, adding every day to your wrinkles and ill-humour. I'll prove to you now, that I have employ'd the last twelve hours to better purpose than you have. Nine of them you slept away—the last three you have been running about town, snarling and making people uneasy with themselves;—whilst I have been sitting peaceably at Weltjie's, where I have won—guess what?

Fitz. Half as much as you lost yesterday—a thousand or two guineas, perhaps.

Spark. Guineas! Poh! you are jesting! Guineas are as scarce with us, as in the coffers of the Congress. Like them we stake with counters, and play for solid earth.

Fitz. [*Impatiently.*] Well!

Spark. Bullion is a mercantile kind of wealth,

passing through the hands of dry-salters, vinegar-merchants, and Lord-Mayors.—Our goddess holds a cornucopia instead of a purse, from which she pours corn-fields, fruitful vallies, and rich herds. This morning she popp'd into my dice-box a snug villa, five hundred acres, arable and pasture, with the next presentation to the living of Guzzleton.

Fitz. A church-living in a dice-box! Well, well; I suppose it will be bestowed as worthily as it was gained!—Good day, my lord, good day!

[*Turning from him.*

Spark. Good night, Crabtree—good night!

[*Going off.*

Enter a Servant.

Tell Belville I call'd to congratulate his escape from the stupid country. [*Going.*

Fitz. My lord!

Spark. [*returning.*] Sir!

Fitz. I am going this morning to visit Lady Bell Bloomer.—I give you this intimation, that we may not risk another rencontre.

Spark. Civilly design'd; and for the same polite reason I inform you, that I shall be there in the evening. [*Exit Lord* SPARKLE.

Fitz. Your master in bed yet! What time was he in town yesterday?

Serv. Late, sir.—We should have been earlier, but we met with Sir Harry Hairbrain on the road, with his new fox-hounds.—Fell in with the hunt at Bagshot—broke cover, run the first burst across the heath towards Datchet;—she then took right an end for Egham, sunk the wind upon us as far as Staines, where Reynard took the road to Oxford, and we the route to town, sir. [*Bowing.*

Fitz. Very geographical, indeed, sir.—Now, pray inform your master——Oh, here we come!

Enter BELVILLE *in a robe de chambre.*

Just risen from your pillows!——Are you not ashamed of this? A fox-hunter, and in bed at eleven!

Belv. My dear, morose, charming, quarrelsome old friend, I am ever in character!—In the country, I defy fatigue and hardship.—Up before the lazy slut Aurora has put on her pink-coloured gown to captivate the plough-boys—scamper over hedge and ditch. Dead with hunger, alight at a cottage; drink milk from the hands of a brown wench, and eat from a wooden platter. In town, I am a fine gentleman; have my hair exactly dressed; my clothes *au dernier gout;* dine on made-dishes; drink burgundy; and, in a word, am every-where the *ton.*

Fitz. So much the worse, so much the worse, young man! To be the *ton* where Vice and Folly are the ruling deities, proves that you must be sometimes a fool, at others a——

Belv. [*Interrupting.*] Psha! you satirists, like moles, shut your eyes to the light, and grope about for the dark side of the human character: there is a great deal of good sense and good meaning in the world. As for its follies, I think folly a mighty pleasant thing; at least, to play the fool gracefully requires more talents than would set up a dozen cynics.

Fitz. Then half the people I know must have wonderful talents, for they have been playing the fool from sixteen to sixty.——Apropos: I found my precious kinsman Lord Sparkle here.

Belv. Ay; there's an instance of the happy effects of total indifference to the sage maxims you recommend.

Fitz. Happy effects do you call them?

Belv. Most triumphant. Who so much admired?

who so much the fashion?—the general favourite of the ladies, and the common object of imitation with the men. Is not Lord Sparkle the happy man, who's to carry the rich and charming widow Lady Bell Bloomer from so many rivals?—And will not you, after quarreling with him half your life, leave him a fine estate at the end of it?

Fitz. No, no!—I tell you, no! [*With warmth.*

Belv. Nay, his success with the widow is certain. —He boasts his triumph every-where; and as she is such a favourite of yours, every thing else will follow.

Fitz. No; for if she marries Sparkle, she will be no longer a favourite. Yet she receives him with a degree of distinction that sometimes makes me fear it; for we frequently see women of accomplishments and beauty, to which every heart yields homage, throw themselves into the arms of the debauched, the silly, and the vain.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Mr. Beauchamp. [*Exit.*

Fitz. Oh! I expected him to call on you this morning. You must obtain his confidence; it will assist me in my designs. When I found myself disappointed in my hopes of his lordship, I selected Beauchamp from the younger branches of my family: but of this he knows nothing, and thinks himself under high obligations to the patronage of the peer; an error in which I wish him to continue, as it will give me an opportunity of proving them both. ——But here he comes!—This way I can avoid him. [*Exit.*

Enter BEAUCHAMP.

Belv. Beauchamp!——and in regimentals!—— Why, prithee, George, what spirit has seized thee now? When I saw thee last, thou wert devoted to

the grave profession of the law, or the church; and I expected to have seen thee envelop'd in wig, wrangling at the bar; or seated in a fat benefice, receiving tythe-pigs and poultry.

Beauch. Those, Belville, were my school-designs; but the fire of youth gave me ardours of a different sort. The heroes of the Areopagus and the forum have yielded to those of Marathon; and I feel, that whilst my country is struggling amidst surrounding foes, I ought not to devote a life to learned indolence, that might be gloriously hazarded in her defence.

Belv. [*Smiling.*] I shan't give you credit now for that fine flourish.——This sudden ardour for "the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war."—I dare swear this heroic spirit springs from the whim of some fine lady, who fancied you would be a smarter fellow in a cockade and gorget, than in a stiff band and perriwig.

Beauch. If your insinuation means that my heart has not been insensible of the charms of some fair lady, you are right; but my transformation is owing to no whim of hers: for, oh Charles! she never yet condescended to make me the object of her thoughts.

Belv. Modest too!—Ay, you were right to give up the law.—But who, pray, may this exalted fair one be who never condescended?

Beauch. I never suffer my lips to wanton with the charming sounds that form her name. I have a kind of miserly felicity in glutting on her dear idea, that would be impaired, should it be known to exist in my heart.

Belv. Ha! ha! ha! who can be the nymph who has inspired so obsolete a passion?—In the days of chivalry it would have been the *ton.*

Beauch. I will gratify you thus far: the lady has beauty, wit, and spirit; but, above all, a mind.—Is

it possible, Charles, to love a woman without a mind?

Belv. Has she a mind for you? That is the most important question.

Beauch. I dare not feed my passion with so presumptuous a hope; yet I would not extinguish it if I could: for it is not a love that tempts me into corners to wear out my days in complaints: it prompts me to use them for the most important purposes:—the ardours it gives me shall be felt in the land of our enemies; they shall know how well I love.

Belv. Poh! poh! this is the gallantry of One Thousand One Hundred and One; the kind of passion that animated our fathers in the fields of Cressy and Poictiers.——Why, no beauty of our age, man, will be won in this style!——Now, suppose yourself at the Opera [*looking through his hand.*] "Gad, that's a fine girl! Twenty thousand, you say? I think I'll have her. Yes, she'll do! I—I must have her! I'll call on her to-morrow and tell her so." Have you spirit and courage enough for that, my Achilles?

Beauch. No, truly.

Belv. Then give up all thoughts of being received.

Beauch. I have no thoughts of hazarding a reception. The pride of birth, and a few hundreds for my education, were the sole patrimony the imprudence of a father left me. My relation, Lord Sparkle, has procured for me a commission.—Generously to offer that and a knapsack to a lady of five thousand a-year, would be properly answered by a contemptuous dismission.

Belv. But suppose she should take a fancy to your knapsack?

Beauch. That would reduce me to the necessity of depriving myself of a happiness I would die to obtain; for never can I submit to be quartered on a

wife's fortune whilst I have a sword to carve subsistence for myself.

Belv. That may be in the great style; but 'tis scarcely in the polite. Will you take chocolate in my dressing-room?

Beauch. No; I am going to take orders at my colonel's: where shall we meet in the evening?

Belv. 'Faith, 'tis impossible to tell! I commit myself to chance for the remainder of the day, and shall finish it as she directs. [*Exeunt at opposite sides.*

Scene changes to an Apartment at CLARINDA'S.

Enter CLARINDA, *reading a Catalogue, followed by* TIFFANY.

Cla. Poor Lady Squander! So Christie has her jewels and furniture at last!——I must go to the sale.——Mark that Dresden service, and the pearls. [*Gives the catalogue to the maid.*] It must be a great comfort to her to see her jewels worn by her friends. —Who was here last night? [*Sitting down, and taking some cards from the table.*] I came home so late, I forgot to inquire!——Mrs. Jessamy—Lady Racket —Miss Belvoir—Lord Sparkle [*starting up*]—Lord Sparkle here! Oh heavens and earth! what possessed me to go to Lady Price's? I wish she and her concert of three fiddles and a flute had been playing to her kids on the Welsh mountains!—Why did you persuade me to go out last night?

Tiff. Dear ma'am, you seem'd so low-spirited, that I thought——

Cla. I missed him every-where!—At four places he was just gone as I came in.—But what does it signify?—'Twas Lady Bell Bloomer he was seeking, I dare swear:—his attachment to the relict is everywhere the subject. Hang those widows! I really believe there's something cabalistical in their names.

—No less than fourteen fine young fellows of fortune have been drawn into the matrimonial noose by them since last February.——'Tis well they were threatened with imprisonment, or we should not have had an unmarried infant above seventeen, between Charing-Cross and Portman-Square.

Tiff. Well, I am sure I wish Lady Bell was married; she's always putting you out of temper.

Cla. Have I not cause? Till she broke upon the town, I was at the top of fashion—you know I was. My dress, my equipage, my furniture, and myself, were the criterions of taste; but a new French chamber-maid enabled her ladyship at one stroke to turn the tide against me.

Tiff. Ay, I don't know what good these Mademoiselles——

Cla. [*Interrupting.*] But, Tiffany, she is to be at court to-day, out of mourning for the first time: I am resolved to be there.——No, I won't go neither, now I think on't.—If she should really outshine me, her triumph will be increased by my being witness to it.——I won't go to St. James's; but I'll go to her route this evening, and, if 'tis possible, prevent Lord Sparkle's being particular to her.—Perhaps that will put her in an ill-humour, and then the advantage will be on my side. [*Exit* CLARINDA.

Tiff. Mercy on us! To be a chamber-maid to a Miss on the brink of thirty requires as good politics, as being prime minister! Now, if she should not rise from her toilette quite in looks to-day, or if the desertion of a lover, or the victory of a rival, should happen, ten to one but I shall be forced to resign, without even a pension to retire on.

[*Exit* TIFFANY.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An elegant Apartment at Lady* BELL BLOOMER'S.

Enter JULIA, *with Papers in her Hand.*

Julia. What an invaluable treasure! Those dear papers, that have lain within the frigid walls of a convent, insensible and uninteresting to every one around them, contain for me a world of happiness. He is in England! How little he suspects that I too am here!

Enter KITTY.

Kitty. Mr. Fitzherbert will be here immediately, ma'am.

Julia. Mr. Fitzherbert! Very well. Has Lady Bell finished dressing yet?

Kitty. [*Speaking exceedingly fast.*] No, ma'am.—Mr. Crape the hair-dresser has been with her these three hours, and her maid is running here and there, and Mr. John flying about to milliners and perfumers, and the new vis-a-vis at the door to carry her ladyship to court.—Every thing black banished, and the liveries come home shining with silver; and the moment she's gone out, every body will be in such a delightful hurry about the rout that her ladyship is to give this evening, that they say all the world——

Julia. Ha! ha! ha! Prithee stop! I can't wonder if Lady Bell should be transported at dropping her weeds, for it seems to have turned the heads of the whole family.

Kitty. Oh! dearee, ma'am, to be sure! for now we shall be so gay! Lady Bell has such fine spirits! ——And 'tis well she has; for the servants tell me

their old master would have broke her heart else.—They all adore her.——I wish you were a little gayer, ma'am!——Somehow we are so dull!—'Tis a wonder so young and so pretty a lady—

Julia. Don't run into impertinence.—I have neither the taste nor talents for public life that Lady Bell Bloomer has.

Kitty. Laws, ma'am, 'tis all use! You are always at home; but Lady Bell knows, that wit and a fine person are not given for a fire-side at home [*Drawling.*] She shines every evening in half the houses of half a dozen parishes, and the next morning we have stanzas in the *Bevy of Beauties*, and sonnets, and billets-doux, and all the fine things that fine ladies are so fond of.

Julia. I can bear your freedoms no longer!—Carry these flowers with my compliments, and tell her ladyship I sent to Richmond for them, as I know her fondness for natural bouquets; and bid Harry deny me to every body this morning, except Mr. Fitzherbert. [*Exit* KITTY.

Enter Mr. FITZHERBERT.

Fitz. Happily excepted, my dear ward! But I suppose you heard my step, and threw in my name for a douceur. I can hardly believe, that when you shut your doors on youth and flattery, you would open them to a cross old man who seldom entertains you with any thing but your faults.

Julia. How you mistake, sir! You are the greatest flatterer I have: your whole conduct flatters me with esteem and love: and as you do not squander these things—— [*Smiling.*

Fitz. There I must correct you.——I do squander them on few objects, indeed, and they are proportionably warmer. I feel attachments fifty times as strong as your good-humoured smiling people, who are every one's humble servant, and every body's friend. Where is Lady Bell?

Julia. Yet at her toilette, I believe. My dear sir, I am every hour more grateful to you for having given me so charming a friend.

Fitz. So I would have you. When you came from France, I prevailed on her ladyship to allow you her society, that you might add to the polish of elegant manners the graces of an elegant mind. Here she comes! her tongue and her heels keeping time.

Enter Lady BELL.

Ay, ay, if all the women in the world were prating young widows, love and gallantry would die away, and our men grow reasonable and discreet.

Lady Bell. Oh you monster! But I am in such divine spirits, that nothing you say can destroy them.——My sweet Julia, what a bouquet! Lady Myrtle will expire.——She was so enveloped in flowers and evergreens last night, that she looked like the picture of fair Rosamond in her bower.—My dear Fitz, do you know we dined yesterday in Hill-street, and had the fortitude to stay till eleven!

Julia. I was tired to death with the fatiguing visit.

Lady Bell. Now I, on the contrary, came away with fresh relish for society. The persevering civility of Sir Andrew, and the maukish insipidity of his tall daughter, act live olives—you can't endure them on your palate, but they heighten the gusto of your tokay.

Fitz. Then I advise your ladyship to serve up Sir Andrew and his daughter at your next entertainment.

Lady Bell. So I would; only one can't remove 'em with the dessert. But how do you like me? Did you ever see so delightful a head? Don't you think I shall make a thousand conquests to-day?

Fitz. Doubtless, if you meet with so many fools. —But pray, which of those you have already made will be the most flattered by all these gay insignia of your liberty?

Lady Bell. Probably, he whom it least concerns.

Julia. Pray tell us, which is that?

Lady Bell. Oh, Heavens! to answer that requires more reflection than I have ever given the subject.

Julia. Should you build a temple to your lovers, I fancy we should find Lord Sparkle's name on the altar.

Lady Bell. Oh! Lord Sparkle!——Who can resist the gay, the elegant, the all-conquering Lord Sparkle? the most distinguished feather in the plume of fashion—without that barbarous strength of mind which gives importance to virtues or to vices. Fashionable, because he's well-dressed—brilliant, because he's of the first clubs, and uses his borrowed wit like his borrowed gold, as though it was his own.

Fitz. Why now, this man, whom you understand so well, you receive as though his tinsel was pure gold.

Lady Bell. Aye, to be sure!——Tinsel is just as well for shew.—The world is charitable, and accepts tinsel for gold in most cases.

Fitz. But in the midst of all this sunshine for Lord Sparkle, will you not throw a ray on the spirited, modest Beauchamp?

Lady Bell. A ray of favour for Beauchamp!—Were I so inclined to make it welcome, I must change my fan for a spear, my feathers for a helmet, and stand forth a Thalestris. You know his mistress is war—[*sighing, and then recovering.*]—But why do I trifle thus?—The hour of triumph is at hand.

Fitz. Of what?

Lady Bell. The moment of triumph!—Anglice, the moment when, having shewn myself at half the houses in St. George's, I am set down at St. James's, my fellows standing on each hand as I descend—the whisper flying through the crowd, "Who is she? Who is that sweet creature?—One of the four heiresses?"—"No; she's a foreign ambassadress."

——I ascend the stairs—move slowly through the rooms—drop my fan—incommode my bouquet—stay to adjust it, that the little gentry may have time to fix their admiration—again move on—enter the drawing-room—throw a flying glance round the circle, and see nothing but spite in the eyes of the women, and a thousand nameless things in those of the men.

Julia. The very soul of giddiness!

Lady Bell. The very soul of happiness!—Can I be less?—Think of a widow just emerged from her weeds for a husband to whom her father, not her heart, united her—my jointure elegant, my figure charming—deny it if you dare!—Pleasure, fortune, youth, health, all opening their stores before me; whilst innocence and conscious honour shall be my handmaids, and guide me in safety through the dangerous ordeal.

Fitz. To your innocence and conscious honour add, if you have time [*archly*], a little prudence, or your sentinels may be surprised asleep, and you reduced to a disgraceful capitulation.

Lady Bell. Oh, I am mistress of my whole situation, and cannot be surprised.——But, Heavens! I am losing a conquest every moment I stay!—The loves and pleasures have prepared their rosy garlands—my triumphal car is waiting—and my proud steeds neighing to be gone.——Away to victory!—

[*Exit with great spirit.*

Fitz. A charming woman, Julia!—she conceals a fine understanding under apparent giddiness, and a most sensible heart beneath an air of indifference.

Julia. Yes, I believe her ladyship's heart is more sensible than she allows to herself. I rally her on Lord Sparkle, but it is Mr. Beauchamp, whose name is never mentioned but her cheeks tell such blushing truths, as she would never forgive me for observing.

Fitz. Upon my word, you seem well acquainted with your friend's heart!——Will you be equally frank as to your own?

Julia. [*In great confusion.*] Sir!——my heart!

Fitz. Yes; will you assist me in reading it?

Julia. To be sure, sir.

Fitz. Then tell me, if amongst the painted, powdered, gilded moths whom your beauty or fortune have allured, is there one whom you would honour with your hand?——Aye, take time; I would not have you precipitate.

Julia. [*Hesitatingly.*] No, sir—not one.

Fitz. I depend on your truth, and on that assurance inform you that a friend of mine is arrived in town, whom I mean this morning to present to you.

Julia. As a——

Fitz. As a lover, who has my warmest wishes that he may become your husband.

Julia. Do I know the person for whom you are thus interested, sir?

Fitz. You do not; but I have had long intimacy with him, and it is the dearest wish of my heart to see him and Julia Manners united.

Julia. I trust, sir, you will allow——

Fitz. Be under no apprehensions.——Much as I'm interested in this union, your inclinations shall be attended to.—I am now going to your lover, and shall introduce him to you this morning.——Come, don't look so distressed, child, at the approach of that period which will give you dignity and character in society. The marriage state is that in which your sex evinces its importance; and where, in the interesting circle of domestic duties, a woman has room to exercise every virtue that constitutes the great and the amiable. [*Exit* FITZHERBERT.

Julia. The moment I so much dreaded is arrived! How shall I reveal to my guardian, and to Lady Bell, that I am married? that I have already dared to take on me those important duties? I must not

reveal it—my solemn promise to my husband—But where is he?—Oh, I must write to him this moment, that I may not be left defenceless to brave the storm of offended authority and love. [*Exit* JULIA.

SCENE II.—BELVILLE'S *Lodgings.*

Enter BELVILLE *new drest.*

Belv. Let my trunks be ready, and the chaise at the door to-morrow morning by six, for I shall dine in Dover.

Fitz. Ha! just in time, I see!—You are ready plumed for flight.

Belv. True; but my flight would have been to you.—Impatient to know the cause of your summoning me from the Dryades and Hamadryades of Berkshire, your letter reached me at the very instant I was setting out for Dover, in my way to Paris.

Fitz. Paris!

Belv. Yes.

Fitz. Poh! poh! stay where you are, stay where you are! The great turnpike between Dover and Calais is a road destructive to this kingdom; and I wish there were toll-gates erected on its confines, to restrain with a heavy tax the number of its travellers.

Belv. I fear the tax would be more generally felt than the benefit; for it would restrain not only the folly-mongers and the fashion-mongers, but the rational inquirer and the travelling connoisseur.

Fitz. So much the better! so much the better!—Our travelling philosophers have done more towards destroying the nerves of their country than all the politics of France. Their chief aim seems to be to establish infidelity, and to captivate us with delusive views of manners still more immoral and licentious than our own.——Hey-day! who's this?—Oh, the Cornish lad, I suppose, whom Lord Sparkle placed here.

Belv. [*Laughing.*] Yes; an odd being.—He was designed by nature for a clodpole, but the notice of a peer overset the little understanding he had, and so he commenced fine gentleman. He has a sister with him, who ran wild upon the commons till her father's death; but she fancies herself a wit, and satirizes Bruin.—Here he comes.

Enter PENDRAGON.

Pen. My dear fellow-lodger, I'm come to——Oh, your servant, sir! [*To* FITZHERBERT.]—Is this gentleman a friend of yours?

Belv. He is.

Pen. Your hand, sir. [*Passes* BELVILLE, *and stands between them.*] If you are Mr. Belville's friend you are my friend, and we are all friends; I soon make acquaintance.

Fitz. A great happiness.

Pen. Yes, so it is, and very polite too. I have been in the great world almost six weeks, and I can see no difference between the great world and the little world, only that they've no ceremony; and so as that's the mark of good breeding, I tries to hit it off.

Fitz. With success.

Pen. To convince you of that I'll tell you a devilish good thing.—You must know——

Fitz. [*Interrupting.*] Excuse me now, but I am convinced you will amuse me, and desire your company at dinner—they'll give you my address below. Mr. Belville, I have business of importance.

[*Exit* FITZHERBERT *and* BELVILLE.

Pen. Gad, I'm glad he asked me to visit him!—He must be a lord by his want of ceremony. [*Imitating.*] "Mr. Belville, I have business of importance"—and off they go.—Now in Cornwall we should have thought that damn'd rude—but 'tis easy.—"Mr. Belville, I have business of importance." [*Going.*] Easy—easy—easy!

Enter SOPHY PENDRAGON.

Sophy. Brother Bobby!—Brother Bobby!

Pen. [*Returning.*] I desire, Miss Pendragon, you won't brother me at this rate—making one look as if one didn't know life. How often shall I tell you, that it is the most ungenteel thing in the world for relations to brother, and father, and cousin one another, and all that sort of thing. I did not get the better of my shame for three days, when you bawled out to Mrs. Dobson at Launceston concert—"Aunt, aunt, here's room between brother and I, if cousin Dick will sit closer to father!"

Sophy. Lack-a-day!—and where's the harm?—What d'ye think one has relations given one for?—to be asham'd of 'em?

Pen. I don't know what they were given us for; but I know no young man of fashion cares for his relations.

Sophy. More shame for your young men of fashion; but I assure you, Brother Bobby, I shall never give in to any such unnatural, new-fangled ways. As for you, since Lord Sparkle took notice of you, you are quite another thing. You used to creep into the parlour when father had company, hanging your head like a dead partridge; steal all round the room behind their backs to get at a chair; then sit down on one corner of it, tying knots in your handkerchief; and if any body drank your health, rise up and scrape your foot so—"Thank you kindly, sir!"—

Pen. By Goles, if you— [*Shaking his fist.*

Sophy. But now, when you enter a room, your hat is tossed carelessly on a table; you pass the company with a half bend of your body; fling yourself into one chair, and throw your legs on another:—"Pray, my dear sir, do me the favour to ring."—"John, bring lemonade."—"Mrs. Plume has been

driving me all morning in Hyde-Park against the wind, and the dust has made my throat mere plaster of Paris."—

Pen. Hang me, if I don't like myself at second-hand better than I thought I should!—Why, if I do it as well as you, Sophy, I shall soon be quite the thing!—And now I'll give you a bit of advice:—As 'tis very certain Lord Sparkle means to introduce you to high life, 'tis fitting you should know how to behave; and as I have been amongst 'em I can tell you.

Sophy. Well!

Pen. Why, first of all, if you should come into a drawing-room, and find twenty or thirty people in the circle, you are not to take the least notice of any one.

Sophy. No!

Pen. No! The servant will, perhaps, get you a chair;—if not, slide into the nearest. The conversation will not be interrupted by your entrance, for they'll take as little notice of you as you of them.

Sophy. Psha!

Pen. Then, be sure to be equally indifferent to the coming-in of others.—I saw poor Lady Carmine one night dying with confusion, for the vulgarity and ill-breeding of her friend, who actually rose from her chair at the entrance of the Duchess of Dulcet and Lady Betty Blowze.

Sophy. Be quiet, Bobby!

Pen. True, as I am a young man of fashion!—Then you must never let your discourse go beyond one word.—If any body should happen to take the trouble to entertain the company, you may throw in —"Charming!—Odious!—Capital!"——Never mount to a phrase, unless to that dear delightful one, of "all that sort of thing."—The use made of that is wonderful!—"All that sort of thing" is an apology for want of wit; it is a substitute for argument;

it will serve for the point of a story or the fate of a battle.

Sophy. Well then,—upon going away?

Pen. Oh, you go away as you came in!—If one has a mind to give the lady of the house a nod, [*nodding*] one may; but 'tis still higher breeding to leave her with as little ceremony as I do you.

[*Exit* PENDRAGON *without looking at her.*

Sophy. I wish I could be sure it was the fashion not to mind forms, I'd go directly and visit Lord Sparkle. I could tear my eyes out to think I was abroad to-day when he called on Mrs. Johnson!—In all the books I have read, I never met with a lover so careless as he is.—Sometimes I have a mind to treat him with disdain, and then I recollect all I have read about ladies' behaviour that break their lovers' hearts;—but he won't come near me.—Now I have been three days in a complying humour—but 'tis all one; still he keeps away. I'll be hang'd if I don't know what he's about soon!—He shan't think to bring me from the Land's End to make a fool of me:—Sophy Pendragon has more spirit than he thinks for. [*Exit* SOPHY.

Re-enter FITZHERBERT *and* BELVILLE.

Belv. A wife! Heaven's last best gift!—But—a—no—I shan't marry yet. I have a hundred little follies to act before I do so rash a thing.

Fitz. But I say you shall marry. I have studied you from eighteen, and know your character, your faults, and your virtues; and such as you are, I have picked you out from all the blockheads and fools about you, to take a fine girl off my hands with twenty thousand pounds.

Belv. 'Tis a bribe, doubtless!—But what is the lady; coquet, prude, or vixen?

Fitz. You may make her what you will. Treat her with confidence, tenderness, and respect, and

she'll be an angel; be morose, suspicious, and neglectful, and she'll be—a woman. The wife's character and conduct is a comment on that of the husband.

Belv. [*Gaily.*] Any thing more?—

Fitz. Yes, she is my ward, and the daughter of the friend of my youth.—I entertain parental affection for her, and give you the highest proof of my esteem in transferring to you the care of her happiness. Refuse it if you dare.

Belv. Dare! My dear friend, I must refuse the honour you offer me.

Fitz. How!

Belv. To be serious, it is not in my power to wed the lady.

Fitz. I understand you.—I am disappointed!—I should have mentioned this subject to you before I had suffered it to make so strong a feature in my picture of future happiness.

Belv. Would you had, that I might have informed you at once—that I am—married.

Fitz. Married!—Where, when, how, with whom?

Belv. Where?—In France.——When?—About eight months since.——How?—By an English clergyman.——With whom?——Ah! with such a one! Her beauty is of the Greek kind, which pleases the mind more than the eye.—Yet to the eye nothing can be more lovely. To this charming creature add the name of Julia Manners, and you know my wife.

Fitz. Julia Manners! Julia Manners, do you say?

Belv. Yes, Julia Manners. I first knew her at the house of a friend in Paris, whose daughters were in the same convent with herself. I often visited her at the grate; at length, by the assistance of Mademoiselle St. Val, prevailed on her to give me her hand, but was immediately torn from her by a summons from my uncle at Florence; whence I was dispatched to England on a ministerial affair.

Fitz. So, so, so, very fine! [*Aside.*] ——I suppose you had the prudence to make yourself acquainted with the lady's family before you married her?

Belv. Yes: her family and fortune are elegant.—She has a guardian, whose address the sweet obstinate refused to give me, that she might herself reveal the marriage, which I had reasons, however, to request her not to do till we both arrived in England.

Fitz. Then you have not seen your bride in England?

Belv. Oh no!—My Julia is yet in her convent. I have been preparing for her reception in Berkshire, and have written to inform her that I would meet her at Calais; but I fear my letters have missed her, and shall therefore set out for Paris, to conduct to England the woman who must give the point to all my felicities.

Fitz. [*Aside.*] And has Julia been capable of this?—Ungrateful girl! is it thus she rewards my cares?

Belv. Your silence and your resentment, my dear friend, whilst they flatter distress me.

Fitz. I'm indeed offended at your marriage, but not with you:—on you I had no claims.

Belv. I do not apprehend you.

Fitz. Perhaps not; and at present I shall not explain myself. [*Going.*]

Belv. If you will leave me, adieu! I am going to run over the town. My mind, impatient for the moment which carries me to my sweet bride, feels all the intermediate time a void, which any adventure may fill up. [*Exit.*

Fitz. Spite of my displeasure, I can hardly conceal from him his happiness!—Yet I will.—Julia must be punished. To vice and folly I am content to appear severe, but she ought not to have thought me so. I have not deserved this want of confidence, and must correct it. If I don't mistake, Pendragon is a fit instrument.—I'll take him home with me.—

Yes, yes, my young lady, you shall have a lover!—Oh these headstrong girls! [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Lord* SPARKLE'S.

Lord SPARKLE *and* BEAUCHAMP *discovered at a Table, on which are Pens, Paper, &c.* SPARKLE *superbly drest.*

Spark. Poor George! and so thou wilt really be in a few days in the bosom of the Atlantic!

> "Farewell to green fields and sweet groves,
> "Where Chloe engag'd my fond heart."——

[*Rises and comes forward.*

Hey for counterscarps, wounds, and victory!

Beauch. I accept your last words for my omen; and now, in the true spirit of Homer's heroes, should take my *congé*, and depart with its influence upon me.

Spark. First take an office which I know must charm you.—You admire Lady Bell Bloomer?

Beauch. Admire her!—Yes, by Heaven—

[*With great warmth.*

Spark. [*Interrupting.*] No heroics, dear George—no heroics! They are totally out now—totally out both in love and war.

Beauch. How, my lord!

Spark. Indifference!—that's the rule. We love, hate, quarrel, and even fight, without suffering our tranquillity to be incommoded:—nothing disturbs.—The keenest discernment will discover nothing particular in the behaviour of lovers on the point of marriage, nor in the married, whilst the articles of separation are preparing.

Beauch. Disgustful apathy!——What becomes of

the energies of the heart in this wretched system? Does it annihilate your feelings?

Spark. Oh no!—I feel, for instance, that I must have Lady Bell Bloomer, and I feel curiosity to know her sentiments of me, of which, however, I have very little doubt: but all my art can't make her serious; she fences admirably, and keeps me at the length of her foil.—To you she will be less on her guard.

Beauch. Me! you surprise me, my lord! How can I be of use in developing her ladyship's sentiments?

Spark. Why, by sifting them. When you talk of me, see if she blushes. Mention some woman as one whom I admire, and observe if she does not make some spiteful remark on her shape, complexion, or conduct; provoke her to abuse me with violence, or to speak of me with confusion—in either case I have her.

Beauch. Your instructions are ample, my lord; but I do not feel myself equal to the embassy.

Spark. [*With pique.*] Your pardon, sir! You refuse then to oblige me?

Beauch. I cannot refuse you—my obligations to your lordship make it impossible:—but of all mankind, I perhaps am the last you should have chosen for the purpose.

Spark. Nay, prithee don't be ridiculous! It is the last service you can do me; and you are the only man whom I could entrust with so delicate a business.

Beauch. I accept it as a proof of your lordship's confidence, and will discharge the commission faithfully.——[*Aside.*] It will at least give me an occasion to converse with Lady Bell, and to converse with her on love.——Oh, my heart! how wilt thou contain thy ardours in the trying moment?

[*Exit* BEAUCHAMP.

Spark. Ha! ha! ha! I am confirmed in my suspicions, that the fellow has had the vanity to indulge a passion for Lady Bell himself. Well, so much the better! the commission I have given him will sufficiently punish him for his presumption.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Mrs. Kitty is below, my lord, Miss Manners's woman.

Spark. Ha!—Send her up, send her up. [*Exit Servant.*] I had began to give up that affair; but I think I won't neither. It will be rather a brilliant thing to have Lady Bell for a wife, and her friend for a mistress:—yes, it will be a point. I think I'll have the *eclat* of the thing. [*Enter* KITTY.]—Well, Kitty, what intelligence from the land of intrigue? What says the little frost-piece Julia?

Kitty. Oh, nothing new, my lord! She's as insensible as ever.—I makes orations all day long of your lordship's merit, and goodness, and fondness, and——

Spark. [*Staring.*] Merit, and goodness, and fondness! And don't you give a parenthesis to my sobriety, and my neatness too! Ha! ha! ha! you foolish little devil, I thought you knew better!—Tell her of my fashion, my extravagance; that I play deepest at Weltjie's, am the best drest at the opera, and have half ruined myself by granting annuities to pretty girls.—Goodness and fondness are baits to catch old prudes, not blooming misses.

Kitty. What, my lord! is spreading out your faults the way to win a fair lady?

Spark. Faults! Thine is chambermaid's morality with a vengeance!—What have all my past lessons been thrown away upon thee, Innocence!—Have I not told thee, that the governing passion of the female mind is the rage of being envied? The most generous of them would like to break the hearts of

half a dozen of their friends by the preference given to themselves. Go home again, good Kitty, and con your lesson afresh: if you can pick up any stories of extravagance and gallantry, affix my name to 'em, and repeat them to your mistress.

Kitty. Then she'll tell 'em to Lady Bell, perhaps, for a warning——

Spark. [*Drawling.*] For a warning, quotha!—My devoirs to Lady Bell are of a different kind, and we understand each other. I address her for a wife, because she's the fashion; and I address Julia for a mistress, because 'tis the fashion to have mistresses from higher orders than sempstresses and mantua-makers.

Kitty. And is that your only reason, my lord, for bribing me so high?

Spark. Not absolutely. I have a pique against her guardian, who, though he has the honour to be related to me, will not suffer me to draw on his banker for a single guinea. His estates, indeed, he can't deprive me of; so as it can do no harm, I'll have the *eclat* of affronting him with spirit.

Kitty. Oh Gemini! I am glad to hear that! I'd do any thing to plague Mr. Fitzherbert, and can go on now with a safe conscience.—He had like to have lost me my place once, because he thought I was flighty; but I'll be up with him now.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr. Belville. [*Exit.*

Enter BELVILLE.

Spark. My dear Belville! [*Apart.*] Go, Kitty, into that room, I'll speak to you presently.

[*Exit* KITTY.

Welcome once more to the region of business and pleasure!

Belv. I thank you. But pray, my lord, don't dismiss the lady.

Spark. The lady! Ha! ha! ha! That lady, sir, is a lady's gentlewoman, a'n't please ye. I suppose you have heard that I am going to marry Lady Bell Bloomer; we are the two most fashionable people in town, and in course must come together.

Belv. A clear deduction.

Spark. Now she has a friend, whom I mean at the same time to take for a mistress: won't that be a stroke, eh!

Belv. Decidedly. Your life is made up of strokes! Every thing with you, my lord, is a hit.

Spark. True, true! I detest a regular mechanical mode of doing things. Men of sense have one way of getting through life; men of genius another.

Belv. Doubtless; and the advantage lies with the men of genius, for to their genius are all their faults imputed; nay, their faults are considered as the graceful meanderings of a mind too ethereal to be confined to the rules of common sense and decorum; —a mighty easy way of building reputation! ha! ha! ha! You are drest with infinite malice to-day, my lord.

Spark. Malice! not at all. The women now-a-days are neither caught by finery or person!—I am drest for court.—I was going to Westminster; but I hear there is to be a presentation of misses to-day, and I would not for the world lose the dear creatures blushes on their first appearance; for, faith, most of them will never blush again.—Will you go?

Belv. 'Tis too late to dress: besides, I have devoted this day to adventure. I am rambling through the town, discovering what new stars have appeared in the galaxy of beauty during my absence, and a dangerous progress it is! The rays of a pair of black eyes from a chariot in Pall-mall would have annihilated me, had not at the same instant two

beautiful blue ones from a window given a fillip to my sinking spirits. A fine-turned ancle, whose polish shone through its neat silk stocking, encountered me in St. James's-street; but I was luckily relieved by a little rosy mouth, that betrayed, with a deceitful smile, teeth most murderously white. A Galatea darted by me on the right, whilst a Helen swam along on the left:—in short, from such sweet besiegers nothing could have preserved me but the sweeter charms of a beloved though absent fair one. [*Sighing.*

Spark. Now I never trouble my head about absentees!—I love beauty as well as any man; but it must be all in the present tense. Shall I set you down any where? I must go.

Belv. No; but I see your writing things are here. If you'll permit me, I'll pen a short note to Beauchamp on business I had forgot this morning, and despatch it by a chairman.

Spark. To be sure. I penned a note ten minutes since to my steward, to raise the poor devils' rents. Upon my soul I pity 'em! But how can it be otherwise, whilst one is obliged to wear fifty acres in a suit, and the produce of a whole farm in a pair of buckles? Adieu! [*Exit singing.*

[*Whilst* SPARKLE *is speaking,* BELVILLE *seats himself, and begins to write.*

Belv. [*Writing.*] Good morning!—My compliments to the ladies' blushes.

Enter KITTY; *passes* BELVILLE *in the front of the stage.*

Kitty. So, so, his lordship has forgot me! I must go after him.

Belv. [*Coming forward.*] Hah! that's the confidante!—So, pretty one, whose chattels are you?

Kitty. My mistress's, sir.

Belv. And who is your mistress?

Kitty. A lady, sir.

Belv. And her name?

Kitty. That of her father, I take it.

Belv. Upon my word, your lady has a very brilliant servant!—Is she as clever as you are?

Kitty. Why, not quite, I think, or she would not keep me to eclipse her.

Belv. Bravo! I wish I knew her. Will you tell me her name?

Kitty. Can you spell?

Belv. Yes.

Kitty. Why then you'll find it in the four and twenty letters. [*Going.*

Belv. [*Catching her.*] Nay, by Heaven, you have raised my curiosity!

Kitty. Poh! what signifies asking me? You know well enough who she is.—I heard you and Lord Sparkle talking about her. Let me go; for I am going to carry a message to Mr. Fitzherbert.

Belv. Mr. Fitzherbert!

Kitty. Aye, her guardian.

Belv. Her guardian! What, Fitzherbert, of Cambridgeshire?

Kitty. Yes; and if you want to know more, he's the crossest old wretch that ever breathed. You'll find him out by that description; and so your servant! [*Exit* KITTY.

Belv. Fitzherbert's ward! and this creature her servant! and Lord Sparkle plotting to get her for a mistress!—I am astonish'd!—the very lady he this morning offered for my bride!—Well,—I must find Fitzherbert immediately.——Lord Sparkle will perhaps think me guilty of a breach of honour.—The imputation I must incur, that I may not be really guilty of a breach of humanity and of gratitude.

[*Exit* BELVILLE.

SCENE II.—*Lady* Bell Bloomer's.

Enter Fitzherbert, *followed by a Servant.*

Fitz. Tell Miss Manners I am here. [*Exit Servant.*]—I cannot, perhaps, be seriously angry with Julia; but I must take some revenge on her disobedience, before I acquaint her with the felicity that attends her. Come in, young Cornish, pray!

Enter Pendragon.

Pen. What, does the lady live in this fine house?

Fitz. Yes:—but pray observe that I don't engage she shall be smitten with you. I can go no farther than to introduce you; the rest must depend on the brilliancy of your manners.

Pen. Oh leave me alone for that!—I knew how 'twould be, if I once shewed myself in London. If she has a long purse I'll whisk her down to Cornwall, jockey Lord Sparkle, and have the borough myself.

Fitz. A man of spirit, I see!

Pen. Oh, as to my spirit, that nobody ever doubted!—I have beat our exciseman, and gone to law with the parson; and to shew you that I did not leave my spirit in the country, since I came to London I have fined a hackney coachman for abuse.

Fitz. Very commendable!—But here comes the lady!

Enter Julia.

Mr. Pendragon, this is my ward, who, I am sure, will give your addresses all the encouragement I wish them.

Pen. Servant, ma'am! [*Aside.*]—She looks plaguy glum!

Julia. I can scarcely support myself! [*Aside.*

Fitz. Pray, my dear, speak to Mr. Pendragon!—You seem greatly confused.

Pen. Oh, sir, I understand it! Young ladies will look confused and embarrassed, and all that sort of thing, on these occasions; but we men of the world are up to all that.

Julia. Heavens! is it to such a being I should have been sacrificed! [*Aside.*

Pen. I see your ward is one of the modest diffident ones: I am surprised at that—bred in high life.

Fitz. Oh, now and then you find a person of that cast in the best company!—but they soon get over it.

Pen. Yes, formerly I used to blush, and be modest, and all that sort of thing; but if any one ever catches me modest again, I'll give 'em my estate for a pilchard.

Julia. Then it seems impossible——pardon me, sir! [*to* FITZHERBERT] that a union can take place between you and me; for I place modesty amongst the elegancies of manners, and think it absolutely necessary to the character of a gentleman.

Fitz. Well done, Julia! [*Aside.*]—Fie upon you, to treat my friend with such asperity!

Pen. O leave her to me, sir; she's ignorant, but I shall teach her. There are three things, miss, only necessary to the character of a gentleman: a good air, good assurance, and good teeth. [*Grinning.*

Julia. [*To* FITZHERBERT.] Doesn't his list want good manners, sir?

Pen. Oh, no, ma'am! If you had said good taste, it would have been nearer the thing; but even that is unnecessary.—A gentleman's friends can furnish his house and choose his books, and his pictures, and he can learn to criticise them by heart.—Nothing is so easy as to criticise;—people do it continually.

Fitz. You see, Mr. Pendragon has information,

Julia.—I'll leave you a few moments, that he may unfold himself to advantage; and remember, if you refuse the man I design for your husband you lose me. Keep it up with spirit! I'll wait for you below. [*To* PENDRAGON.]——Now shall impertinence and disobedience correct each other!

[*Exit* FITZHERBERT.

Pen. Now to strike her with my superior ease! [*Aside.*]—So, miss, your guardian, I think, has a mind that we shall—in the vulgar speech—marry!

Julia. Well, sir; but are you not frightened at your approach to such a state!—Do you know what belongs to the character of a husband?

Pen. What belongs to it? Aye! Do you know what belongs to being a wife?

Julia. Yes; I guess that to your wife will belong ill-humour with you at home—shame with you abroad;—in her face forced smiles—in her heart hidden thorns.

Pen. The devil! What, you have found your tongue, ma'am! Oh, oh, I shall have a fine time on't, I guess, when our connection begins!

Julia. Our connection!—Pray, sir, drop the idea!—I protest to you, that were it possible for me to become your wife I should be the most wretched of women.

Pen. O no, you wou'dn't! I hardly know a wife who is not wretched.

Julia. Unfeeling man! Would you presume to enter into a state, to the happiness of which, union of soul, delicacy of sentiment, and all the elegant attention of polished manners are necessary and indispensable?

Pen. What's all that? Union of soul! sentiment! attentions!—That's not life, I'm sure.

Julia. I am not able to conceive by what witchcraft Mr. Fitzherbert has been blinded to the weakness of your head and the turpitude of your heart.

—Tell him, sir, there is not a fate I would not prefer to that of being united to a man whose vice is the effect of folly, and whose folly is as hateful even as his vice. [*Exit* JULIA.

Pen. Yes, yes, I'll tell, depend on't!—Egad, she's a spirit!—So much the better, more pleasure in taming her!—A meek wife cheats a man of his rights, and deprives him of the pleasure of exacting her obedience.——Let me see!——Vice—folly—impudence—ignorance.—Ignorance too!

[*Exit* PENDRAGON.

Re-enter JULIA.

Julia. What have I done? I dare not now see my guardian! His displeasure will kill me. Oh, Belville, where art thou? Come and shield thy unhappy bride!—What steps can I take?

Enter KITTY.

Kitty. Dear ma'am, I'm so grieved to see you so unhappy! If I had such a cross old guardian I'd run away from him.

Julia. The very thought which that instant presented itself to my mind!—Have you not told me that some relation of yours has lodgings?

Kitty. Yes, ma'am; the most elegantest in London.

Julia. I don't want elegant apartments; but I wish for a short time to be concealed in some family of reputation.

Kitty. To be sure, ma'am, 'tis the most prudent thing you can do.

Julia. And yet my heart fails me.

Kitty. Oh, ma'am, don't hesitate! I'll go and pack up a few things, and call a coach and be off, before Lady Bell comes from court.

Julia. I fear 'tis a wrong step; and yet what other can I take? I dare not reveal my marriage without

the permission of my husband; and till his arrival I must avoid both a guardian's anger and the addresses of a lover.——The honour of Belville would be insulted, should I permit them to be repeated. [*Aside.*] [*Exit* JULIA.

Kitty. I know not what she means, but there is some mystery I find. So there should be!——If ladies had not mysteries a chambermaid's place would be hardly worth keeping.—I have mysteries too, and she shall have their explanation from Lord Sparkle. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—CLARINDA'S *House.*

Enter Lady BELL *meeting* CLARINDA.

Lady Bell. Ha! ha! ha! my dear creature, what an *embarras!* Driving swiftly through the streets, Lady Whipcord dashed upon us in her flaming phaeton and six, gave a monstrous big Newmarket word to my poor fellows, and with infinite dexterity entangled the traces. It happened near your door; so I have taken shelter with you, and left her ladyship to settle the dispute with my coachman, ha! ha! ha! But why were you not at court to-day?

Cla. I had a teazing head-ach: but pray, tell me what happened there.—[*Aside.*] Deuce take her, she looks as well as ever!

Lady Bell. Oh, the ladies, as usual, brilliant—nothing so flat as the men! The horrid English custom ruins them for conversation. They make themselves members of clubs in the way of business, and members of parliament in the way of amusement: all their passions are reserved for the first, and all their wit for the last.

Cla. 'Tis better in Paris.

Lady Bell. Oh, 'tis quite another thing! Whilst we awkwardly copy the follies of the Parisians, we absurdly omit the charming part of their character.

Devoted to elegance, they catch their opinions, their wit, and their *bon mots* from the mouths of the ladies. 'Tis in the drawing-room of madame the duchess the marquis learns his politics; whilst the sprightly countess dispenses taste and philosophy to a circle of bishops, generals, and abbés.

Cla. All that may be just; yet I am mistaken if you have not found one Englishman to reconcile you to the manners of the rest. Lord Sparkle, for instance—your ladyship thinks, I'm sure, that he has wit at will.

Lady Bell. Oh yes, quite at will!——His wit, like his essence bottle, is a collection of all that is poignant in a thousand flowers; and like that, is most useful when he himself is most insipidly vacant.

Cla. With such sentiments I wonder you can suffer his addresses.

Lady Bell. What can I do? The man is so much the fashion, and I shall be so much envied.——Why you know, my dear, for instance—you'd be inclined to stick a poisoned nosegay in my bosom if I should take him.

Cla. Ha! ha! ha! ridiculous! Believe me, madam, I shall neither prepare a bouquet, nor invoke a fiery shower to grace your nuptials.

Lady Bell. [*Aside.*] No, your showers would be tears, I fancy.——Here he comes!

Cla. Hah! Lord Sparkle! Your ladyship's accident was fortunate. [*Sneering.*

Enter Lord SPARKLE.

Spark. Heavens! Lady Bell! your horses fly like the doves of Venus. I followed you from St. James's;—but my poor earth-born cattle wou'dn't keep pace with yours.

Cla. Oh, don't complain! If her ladyship won the race, you see she stopped for you at the goal.

Spark. Charming Miss Belmour, what an enliven-

ing intimation! Where was your ladyship on Thursday? You would have found excellent food for your satire at Mrs. Olio's: We had all the law ladies from Lincoln's-inn, a dozen gold velvets from Bishopsgate, with the wives and daughters of half the M. D.'s and LL. D.'s in town.

Lady Bell. Oh, my entertainment was quite as good as yours! We were in Brook-street, at Lady Laurel's, and found her surrounded by her literati of all denominations.——We had masters of art and misses of science:——on one hand an essayist, on the other a moralist:—— there a poetaster, here a translator;—— in that corner a philosopher, in the other a compiler of magazines.——Tropes, epigrams, and syllogisms flew like sky-rockets in every direction, till the ambition of pre-eminence lighted the flame of controversy, when they gave each other the lie literary with infinite spirit and decorum.

Spark. Excellent; I'll repeat every word in a place where it will be remembered, and the satire enjoyed.

Cla. In that hope your lordship may safely knock at every door in the street:—satire is welcome every where.

Lady Bell. Yes, if it will bear a laugh—that's the grand art of conversation. They pretend we are fond of slander; but rob scandal of its laugh, and 'twould soon be banished to the second table, for the amusement of butlers and chambermaids.

Spark. Indeed! Then I believe half our acquaintance would go down stairs to the second table too!—they'd think their servants had the best of the dish. [*Enter a Servant, gives Lord* SPARKLE *a letter, and exit.*

Spark. [*Reads it aside.*] Julia! astonishing!—So sudden in your movements, Mrs. Kitty?—[*Turning to the ladies.*] This vulgar thing called business is the greatest evil in life! It destroys our most bril-

liant hours, and is fit only for younger brothers and humble cousins.—Miss Belmour, I must tear myself away. Shall I attend your ladyship to your carriage?

Lady Bell. If you please!—Miss Belmour, "I must tear myself away;"—but you'll shine upon us at night. [*Exeunt Lord* SPARKLE *and Lady* BELL.

Cla. Shine upon you at night!—That, I know, you are insolent enough to believe impossible.—— What can I think of her sentiments for Lord Sparkle? Sometimes I believe 'tis a mere attachment of vanity on both sides.—That reserved creature, Beauchamp, is in his confidence; but he leaves town this very day, and I shall have no opportunity of conversing with him. [*Muses.*] There is but one chance—going to visit him.——But how can I possibly do that? Deuce take him! If he had a library, one might go to look at his books. Well, I don't care, go I will; and if I can't invent an excuse, I'll put a good face upon the matter, and go without one.—[*Going.*] I should expire if my visit should be discovered. Poh! I must risque every thing!—To be bold, is sometimes to be right. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment at Lady* BELL'S.

Enter Lady BELL, *followed by her Maid.*

Lady Bell. Miss Manners gone out in a hackney-coach, and no message left!

Maid. No, madam.

Lady Bell. Very strange!

Maid. Mr. Beauchamp has been waiting almost an hour for your ladyship's return.

Lady Bell. Mr. Beauchamp!—Here, go and put

some otto of roses in that handkerchief. [*Exit Maid.*] Now, shall I admit him, or not? This formal waiting looks very like formal business. Poh, I hate that!—I suppose he has at length vanquished his modesty, and is come to tell me that—that—Well, I vow I won't hear him.—Yes, I will. I long to know the style in which these reserv'd men make love.—To what imprudence would my heart betray me? Yet I may surely indulge myself in hearing him speak of love; in hearing, probably for the first time, its genuine language. [*Enter Maid, and presents the handkerchief.*] Tell Mr. Beauchamp I am here. [*Exit Maid.*] Now, how shall I receive him? It will be intolerable to be formal.—[*Takes her fan from her pocket and traverses the stage, humming a tune.—Enter* BEAUCHAMP.] Oh, Mr. Beauchamp, this is the luckiest thing!—I have had ten disputes to-day about the figures in my fan; and you shall decide 'em. Is that beautiful nymph a flying Daphne, or an Atalanta?

Beauch. [*Looking at her fan.*] From the terror of the eye, madam, and the swiftness of her step, it must be a Daphne. I think Atalanta's head would be more at variance with her feet; and, whilst she flies, her eye would be invitingly turn'd on her pursuers.

Lady Bell. I think you are right!——Yes—there does want the kind, inviting glance, to be sure.

Beauch. What a misfortune to a lover! I know one to whom your ladyship appears the disdainful Daphne.——How happy! could he behold in your eye the encouragement of Atalanta's!

Lady Bell. [*Aside.*] Mercy! for so bashful a man that's pretty plain.

Beauch. This is probably the last visit I can make you before I leave England:—will your ladyship permit me, before I leave it, to acquaint you that

there is a man whose happiness depends on your favour? [*Agitated.*

Lady Bell. So, now he's going to be perplexing again! [*Aside.*]—A man whose happiness depends on me, Mr. Beauchamp? [*Looking on her fan.*

Beauch. Yes, madam!—and—and—[*aside.*] I cannot go on—Why did I accept a commission in which success would destroy me?

Lady Bell. How evidently this is the first time he ever made love! [*Aside.*]—The man seems to have chosen a very diffident advocate in you, sir.

Beauch. 'Tis more than diffidence, madam, my task is painful.

Lady Bell. Ay, I thought so! You have taken a brief in a cause you don't like; I could plead it better myself.

Beauch. I feel the reproach.

Lady Bell. 'Tis difficult for you, perhaps, to speak in the third person?——Try it in the first. Suppose, now, ha! ha! only suppose, I say! for the jest's sake, that you yourself have a passion for me, and then try—how you can plead it.

Beauch. [*Kneeling.*] Thus—thus would I plead it, and swear, that thou art dear to my heart as fame, and honour!—To look at thee is rapture; to love thee, though without hope,—felicity!

Lady Bell. Oh, I thought I should bring him to the point at last! [*Aside.*

Beauch. [*Rising, aside.*] To what dishonesty have I been betray'd!—Thus, madam, speaks my friend, through my lips;—'tis thus he pleads his passion.

Lady Bell. Provoking! [*Aside.*]—What friend is this, sir, who is weak enough to use the language of another to explain his heart?

Beauch. Lord Sparkle.

Lady Bell. Lord Sparkle! Was it for him you knelt? [*He bows to her.*]—Then, sir, I must inform you, that the liberty you have taken——[*Aside.*]

Heavens, how do I betray myself!—Tell me, sir, on your honour, do you wish to succeed in pleading the passion of Lord Sparkle?

Beauch. [*Hesitating.*] My obligations to his lordship—our relationship—the confidence he has repos'd in me—

Lady Bell. Stop, sir! I, too, will repose confidence in you, and confess that there is a man whom I sometimes suspect not to be indifferent to me;—but 'tis not Lord Sparkle! Tell him so;—and tell him that—that—tell him what you will.

Beauch. Heavens, what does she mean! What language is this her eye speaks? [*Aside.*

Lady Bell. Do you visit me this evening? Here will be many of my friends; and you shall then see me in the presence of the man my heart prefers.

[BEAUCHAMP *bows, and goes to the door; then returns, advances towards Lady* BELL, *makes an effort to speak; finds it impossible, then bows, and exit.*

Heavens! what necessity have lovers for words? What persuasion in that bashful irresolution! Now, shall I let him quit England, or not?—What! give up a coronet and Lord Sparkle for a cockade and Beauchamp! Preposterous! says Vanity.—But what says Love? I don't exactly know; but I'll examine their separate claims, and settle them with all the casuistry of four and twenty. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Lord* SPARKLE'S *House.*

Enter JULIA *and* KITTY.

Julia. I am so agitated with this rash step, that I can hardly breathe! [*throwing herself into a chair.*] Why did you confirm me in my imprudent resolution?

Kitty. Imprudent! I'm sure, ma'am, 'tis very

prudent, and very right, that a young lady like you should not be snubb'd, and have her inclination thwarted by an ill natur'd positive old guardian.

Julia. [*Looking round.*] What apartments! and the hall we came through had an air much beyond a lodging-house! 'Tis all too fine for my purpose; I want to be private.

Kitty. Oh dear ma'am, you may be as private here as you please! [*A rapping at the door.*] There's my cousin come home, I dare say; I'll send her to you, and then you may settle terms. [*Exit.*

Julia. I feel I have done wrong, and yet I am so distracted, I know not how I could have done otherwise. [*Enter Lord* SPARKLE.] Heavens! Lord Sparkle here!

Spark. Yes, my lovely Julia, here I am; and upon my soul, if you knew the engagements I have broke for the happiness, you would be gratified.

Julia. Gratified! I am astonish'd! equally astonish'd at your being here, and at your strange address.

Spark. Astonish'd at my being here! Why, to be sure, it is not usual to find a man of fashion in his own house; but when I heard that you were in my house, how could I do less than fly home?

Julia. Home! Your own house! What can all this mean?—

Spark. Mean! Love—gallantry—joy, and ever-new delights.

Julia. Oh! I am betray'd! Where is my wicked servant?

Spark. Poh, never think of her:—Why all this flutter, my sweet girl? You have only chang'd guardians; and you shall find, that being ward to a young man of fashion and spirit, is a very different thing from——

Julia. Oh Heavens! what will become of me?

Spark. Nay, this is quite ridiculous, after having

fled to my protection. I feel myself highly honoured by your confidence, and will take care to deserve it.

Julia. Why do I remain here an instant?

[*Going towards the door.*

Spark. [*Holding her.*] This is downright rudeness! But you young ladies are so fickle in your resolutions—But, be assured, after having chosen my house for your asylum, I shall not be so impolite as to suffer you to seek another.

Julia. Oh wretched artifice! You know, sir, that your house and you I would have fled from to the farthest corner of——[*Enter* BEAUCHAMP.]—Oh, Mr. Beauchamp, save me!—I have been basely betrayed!—

Beauch. [*Astonished.*] Betrayed!—Miss Manners! Yes, madam, I will protect you at every hazard.

Spark. Come, none of your antique virtues, George, pray! This is a piece of *badinage* of the eighteenth century, and you can't possibly understand it!—Miss Manners chose to pay me a visit, and I desire you'll leave us.

Julia. My lord, how dare you thus trifle with a woman's honour?

Beauch. Be not alarm'd, madam, I will defend you.

Spark. [*Taking him aside.*] Poh, prithee, George, be discreet: This is all female artifice.—You popp'd upon us, and this is a salver for her reputation.

Beauch. Pardon me, my lord! In believing you, in opposition to the evidence of this young lady's terrors, I may be guilty of an irremeable error.

Spark. Nay, if you are serious, sir, how dare you break in upon my privacy?

Beauch. This is not a time to answer you, my lord! The business that brought me here, I am indebted to; I should not else have prevented your base designs.

Spark. Base designs, Mr. Beauchamp!

Beauch. Yes, Lord Sparkle.—Shall I attend you home, madam?

Julia. Oh, sir, I dare not go there! I fled from Lady Bell's, when I was betrayed into this inhuman man's power.—Convey me to some place where I may have leisure to reflect.

Spark. And do you think, Mr. Beauchamp, I shall put up with this!—Remember, sir——

Beauch. [*Interrupting.*] Yes, my lord, that, as a man, it is my duty to protect endanger'd innocence; that, as a soldier, it is part of the essence of my character; and, whilst I am grateful to you for the commission I have the honour to bear, I will not disgrace it, in suffering myself to be intimidated by your frowns. [*Exit* BEAUCHAMP, *leading* JULIA.

Spark. So!—so!—so!—an ancient hero in the house of a modern man of fashion!—Alexander in the tent of Darius!—Scipio and the fair Parthenia! The fellow has not an idea of any morals but those in use during the Olympiads.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr. Pendragon and his sister, my lord.

Spark. Who? [*With an air of disgust.*

Serv. Mr. and Miss Pendragon.

Spark. Then carry 'em to the housekeeper's room!——Give 'em jellies and plum-cake, and tell 'em—[*Enter* PENDRAGON, *leading* SOPHY.] Oh, my dear Miss Pendragon, you honour me.—But I am the most unlucky man on earth!—I am obliged, upon business of infinite consequence, to be at Whitehall within five minutes.

Pen. But, first, my lord, you must settle a little business here with Miss Pendragon.

Sophy. I tell you, Bobby, I'll speak myself;—and as few words are best, pray, my lord, what do you mean by treating me in this manner?

Spark. I shall be miserable beyond bearing, if any treatment of mine has incurred your displeasure.

Sophy. Well, now you talk of being miserable, you have softened my heart at once: but pray, my lord, is it fashionable for people on the terms you and I are to keep asunder?

Spark. What the devil can the girl mean? [*Aside.*

Sophy. Never even write!—no billets!—no bribing the maid to slip notes into my hand!——Why you don't even complain, though 'tis five days since you saw me.

Spark. Complain! I am sure I have been exceedingly wretched.

Sophy. Then why did you not tell me so? Why, that's the very thing I wanted: if I had known you had been wretched, I should have been happy.

Pen. Well, I see I shall lose an opportunity here! —I came to challenge you, my lord.

Spark. Challenge me!

Pen. Yes:—Miss Pendragon told me she was dissatisfied:——then, says I, I'll demand satisfaction: ——and I didn't care if things had gone a little farther; for to call out a lord would be a feather in my cap as long as I live.——However, you are agreed.

Sophy. Do be quiet, Bobby:—we are not agreed: —I have heard nothing of settlements yet; nothing of jewels.

Spark. My dear ma'am, you are pleased to amuse yourself.

Sophy. Why, my lord, those things must be all settled before-hand, you know.

Spark. Before what?

Sophy. What! before our marriage, my lord.

Spark. Marriage! ha! ha! ha!

Sophy. Hey-day! Will you pretend that you did not intend to marry me, when I can prove that you have courted me from twenty instances?

Spark. Indeed!

Pen. Ay, that she can: instances as striking as your lordship's red heels.—Come, Miss Pendragon, your proofs? I'll support 'em.

Sophy. Why, in the first place, my lord, you once placed a nosegay in my bosom, and said, "Oh! I wish I were these happy roses!"—the very speech that Sir Harry Hargrave made to Miss Woodville.—Another time you said, "I was a most bewitching and adorable girl!"—exactly what Colonel Finch said to Lady Lucy Lustre.—Another time you said, "How would a coronet become those shining tresses!"—the very speech of Lord Rosehill to Miss Danvers; and these couples were every one married.

Spark. Married! I never heard of 'em.—Who are they? Where the devil do they live?

Pen. [*Strutting up to him.*] Live!—Why, in our county, to be sure.

Sophy. No, no, Bobby; in The Reclaim'd Rake, and The Constant Lovers, and Sir Charles Grandison, and Roderick Random, and——

Pen. Yes, sir; they live at Random, with Sir Charles Grandison.—Now d'ye know 'em?

Spark. Ha! ha! ha! you are a charming little lawyer; [*to* SOPHY.] and might, perhaps, establish your proofs for precedents, if Sir Charles Grandison was on the bench: yet I never heard of his being made Chief-Justice, though I never thought him fit for any thing else.

Pen. What the devil's this?——What, did not you bring all those fine proofs from fashionable life?—And are you such a fool as not to understand what we call common-place?

Sophy. Common-place!

Pen. Yes; we persons of elegant life use the figure hyperbole.——

Sophy. Hyperbole! What's that?

Pen. Why, that's as much as to say, a stretch.

Sophy. A stretch! What, then, you have been mocking me, my lord?

Spark. Not in the least; I shall be the happiest man existing to, to—[*aside.*] Egad, I must take care of my phrases:——I mean that I shall be always, and upon all occasions, your most devoted, *tres humblement serviteur.*——Were there ever two such bumpkins! [*Exit.*

Sophy. What's he gone? Oh! Villain! Monster! I am forsaken! Oh! I am rejected!——All Cornwall will know it! [*Crying.*

Pen. Tin-mines and all. But don't ye cry, Miss Pendragon—don't ye cry! [*Sobbing.*

Sophy. Oh! I am rejected!

Pen. I am glad on't, with all my heart. I'll challenge him yet, and they won't know in Cornwall exactly how it was.—They'll hear that a lord fought about ye, and all that sort of thing; and whether for ye, or against ye, 'twill be much the same.

Sophy. But will you challenge him, really, Bobby?

Pen. Upon honour!——I admire the claw of the thing. Egad, Sophy, I'm glad he's forsaken thee: now my character will be finished. A man can't shew his face in company, till he has stood shot, and fired his pistol in the air.

Sophy. In the air! If you don't fire it through him——

Pen. Oh, never fear! I'll do all that sort of thing. Come along! I'll go home directly, and practise at the hen-coop in the yard. I'll fire through one end, and you shall hold your calash against the other; and if I don't hit it, say I'm no marksman.

[*Exit* PENDRAGON, *with* SOPHY *under his arm.*

SCENE III.—Beauchamp's *Lodgings.*

Enter Beauchamp *and* Julia.

Beauch. I intreat your pardon for conducting you to my own lodgings;—but here, madam, you will be safe, 'till you determine how to act—What are your commands for me?

Julia. Oh, Mr. Beauchamp, I have no commands—I have no designs!—I have been very imprudent; I am still more unhappy.

Beauch. Shall I acquaint Mr. Fitzherbert?

Julia. It was to avoid him that I left Lady Bell.—I have reasons that make it impossible to see Mr. Fitzherbert now.

Beauch. Is there no other friend?

Julia. O yes, I have one friend:—were he here, all my difficulties would vanish!—It may seem strange, Mr. Beauchamp, but I expect that you believe—Heavens! here's company! [*looking at the wing.*] 'Tis Miss Belmour—the last woman on earth whom I would trust!—Where can I go?

Beauch. Miss Belmour! Very odd!—But pray be not uneasy.—That room, madam, if you will condescend— [*She rushes through the door.*

Enter Clarinda, *laughing.*

Cla. Ha! ha! ha! I expect your gravity to be amazingly discomposed at so hardy a visit; but I took it very ill that you did not design to call upon me before your departure; and so, as I was passing your door, I stopped, in mere frolic, to inquire the cause.

Beauch. You do me infinite honour, madam: I am thankful that I fail'd in my attention, since it has procur'd me so distinguish'd a favour.

Cla. Oh, your most obedient:—You are going to leave England for a long while. You'll find us all in different situations, probably, on your return.—

Your friend, Lord Sparkle, for instance—I am inform'd that he is really to marry Lady Bell Bloomer; but I don't believe it—do you?

Beauch. 'Tis impossible, madam, for me——

Cla. Poh! poh! impossible! Such friends as you are, I suppose, keep nothing from one another.—We women can't exist without a confidante: and, I dare say, you men are full as communicative. Not that it is any thing to me; but as I have a prodigious regard for Lady Bell—

Belv. [*Behind.*] Beauchamp! Beauchamp!

Cla. Heaven and earth, how unlucky! Here's some man! I am the nicest creature breathing in my reputation: what will he think? I'll run into this room. [*Runs toward the door.*

Beauch. [*Preventing her.*] Pardon me, madam, you cannot enter there.

Cla. [*Pushing at the door.*] I must—Oh—oh! the door is held, sir.

Beauch. My dear madam, I am infinitely sorry for the accident; but suppose——suppose, I say, ma'am, that a friend of mine has been in a duel, and conceal'd in that room.

Cla. Ridiculous! I saw the corner of a hoop and a white sattin petticoat:—is that the dress of your duelling friends? I will go in.—[*struggling.*] So! [*flinging away spitefully.*] 'tis too late!

Enter BELVILLE.

Belv. So! so! so! I beg your pardon. How could you be so indiscreet, Beauchamp? Though a young soldier, I thought you knew enough of generalship to be prepar'd for a surprise.

Cla. Oh, so he was; but not for two surprises.—One has happened already, and a hasty retreat the consequence.

Beauch. Believe me, Belville—I am infinitely concerned—[*to* CLARINDA.]

Cla. Oh! I detest your impertinent concern! Keep it for the lady in the other room.

Belv. A lady in the other room too! Hey-day! Beauchamp, who would have suspected—

Beauch. 'Tis all a mistake! The lady in the next room—But, prithee, go.—

Belv. Only tell me if you have seen Fitzherbert. I have been seeking him this hour, on business of the utmost consequence.

Beauch. I have not; but, about this time, you'll find him at home.

Belv. Enough: Miss Belmour, pray suffer no concern; depend on my honour.—Beauchamp [*taking him aside*], who is the lady in the other room?

Beauch. Had I meant you to have known, that room would have been unnecessary.

[BELVILLE *seems still inquisitive;* BEAUCHAMP *draws him towards the wing.*

Cla. Now do I die to know who it can be. Indeed, 'tis necessary for my own sake.—Whilst she has been hid, I have been exposed; and who knows what the creature may say? I'll try once more. She has my secret, and I'll have hers.

[*Forces open the door.*

Julia. [*Rushes out.*] Belville! [*running towards him.*

Belv. [*Starting back.*] Julia!

Cla. Miss Manners!—Ha! ha! ha!

Julia. Oh, Belville, throw me not from you!

Belv. Astonishing!

Cla. Oh, charming! The modest Julia, and the reserv'd Beauchamp! Ha! ha! ha!—But, Mr. Belville, how came you of this sober party? ha! ha! ha!

Julia. Speak to me!

Cla. Now, Mr. Beauchamp, you know the purport of my visit.——I had heard that Miss Manners has been seen to visit you, and, not being willing to trust to such a report, was resolved, if possible, to discover the truth.

Belv. [*To* JULIA.] Wretched woman!

Julia. [*To* CLARINDA.] Barbarous creature! Oh hear me, I conjure you!

Belv. Hear you!—No, madam;—and if my contempt, my hatred, my———oh!———You, sir, I must speak to in another place;—yet, perhaps, you were not acquainted that———What would I say!———The word which I have pronounced with rapture, choaks me. From this moment farewell! [*To* JULIA.]

[*Exit* BELVILLE.

Beauch. What can I think of all this?

Julia. Oh sir!

Beauch. Permit me, madam, to ask if you have long known Mr. Belville?

Julia. Yes, too long.

Cla. Oh, oh, too long!—Aye, young ladies should be cautious how they form acquaintance. For my part—But you look ill, child!—[*taking her by the hand.*] Well, I have no hard heart; I can pity your weakness, Miss;—I won't upbraid you now.—My coach waits;—shall I conduct you home?

Julia. Yes, to Lady Bell———to Lady Bell———I am very ill!

Cla. Adieu, Mr. Beauchamp! This has been an unlucky frolic.—'Tis amazing, you grave people can be so careless. [*Exit* JULIA *and* CLARINDA.

Beauch. An unlucky frolic, indeed! And I am so thoroughly confounded, that I know not what judgment to form of the adventure.—I always considered Miss Manners as a pattern of delicacy and virtue; nor dare I now, spite of circumstances, think otherwise.

Enter Lord SPARKLE.

Spark. So, so, Signor Quixote! What so soon lost your prize! Aye, you see quarrelling for these virtuous women is as unprofitable as the assault of the windmills.—Have you seen Lady Bell in my behalf?

Beauch. Lady Bell, my lord! Why, sure, 'tis impossible after your attempt on Miss Manners—

Spark. Psha! that is a stroke in my favour. Women like to receive the devoirs of those whom others of their sex have found so dangerous. What did you discover of Lady Bell's sentiment towards me?

Beauch. I meant to have given the intelligence softened, but the agitations of my mind make it impracticable; I must, therefore, inform you in one word, Lady Bell Bloomer's choice is made, and that choice has not fallen upon your lordship.

Spark. Then I must inform you in two words, that I am convinced you are mistaken. But your reasons, sir, your reasons?

Beauch. Her ladyship furnished me with a decisive one: she acknowledged a pre-engagement; and added, if I visited her this evening, I should see her in the presence of the man her heart prefers.

Spark. [*Laughing violently.*] Excellent! charming ingenuity! Ha! ha! ha! the kindest, softest message that ever woman fram'd; and you, like the sheep loaden with the golden fleece, bore it, insensible of its value.—Ha! ha! ha! you can't see through the pretty artifice?

Beauch. No, really.

Spark. Why, 'tis I who am to be there; there by particular invitation. You'll see her in my presence; and this was her pretty mysterious way of informing me that I am the object of her choice.

Beauch. Indeed!

Spark. Without a doubt: but you deep people are the dullest fellows at a hint; a man of half your parts would have seen it.—But I am satisfied, and shall go to her rout in brilliant spirits.—You shall come, and see my triumph confirmed.—Come, you rogue, and see the lovely widow in the presence of the man her heart prefers.—Poor George! You

must have been cursedly stupid, not to have conceiv'd that I was the person. [*Exit.*

Beauch. Yes, I will come.—Oh vanity! I had dared to explain—Yes, I construed the sweet confusion—Oh, I blush at my own arrogance! Lord Sparkle must be right.—Well, this night decides it.—Narrowly will I watch each tone and look, to discover——Oh!—ever blest!—he whom her heart prefers! [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment at Lady* BELL'S. *A Table, with Candles.*

Enter Lady BELL *and Servant.*

Lady Bell. Are the tables placed in the outer room?

Serv. Yes, ma'am, all but the Pharaoh-table.

Lady Bell. Then carry that there too.——I positively will not have a table in the drawing-room.——[*Exit Servant.*] Those who play don't visit me, but the card-tables; and where they find them is very immaterial.—Let me see! For whist, Sir James Jennet—Lady Ponto—Mrs. Lurchem, and Lady Carmine.——For Pharaoh, Mrs. Evergreen, Lord Dangle, Sir Harry—Hey-dey!

Enter CLARINDA *and* JULIA.

Cla. Come, child, don't faint!—You had more cause for terror half an hour ago.

Lady Bell. Heavens, Julia! where have you been?

Cla. Ay, that's a circumstance you would not have known, but for an accident; and I am very sorry it fell to my lot to make the discovery.

Lady Bell. [*Taking* JULIA'S *hand.*] Speak, my love.

Julia. Miss Belmour will tell you all she knows.—I am too wretched!

Cla. Nay, as to what I know,—I know very little.—I can tell what I saw, indeed.—Having received intimations not quite consonant to one's notions of decorum, I pretended a frolic, and called on Mr. Beauchamp, and there I found this lady concealed.

Lady Bell. Heavens, Julia! 'Tis impossible.

Cla. Nay, she can't attempt to deny what I myself saw.—Other discoveries had liked to have been made too; but Miss Manners may explain them herself; for I see your rooms begin to fill.—I shall report that your ladyship is a little indisposed, as an excuse for your not immediately appearing.

[*Exit* CLARINDA.

Lady Bell. [*With a countenance of terror.*] Julia! You at Mr. Beauchamp's!

Julia. Lady Bell, though I have acted rashly, and was indeed found there, I am not the guilty creature you imagine.—I am married!—I will no longer conceal it! [*Bursting into tears.*

Lady Bell. Married! Oh Heavens!

[*Throws herself in a chair, with her back to* JULIA.

Julia. I dared not reveal it to my guardian, and for that reason fled from your house.

Lady Bell. O Julia, and you are married! What a serpent have I nourished!—But forgive me!—You knew not——alas! I knew not myself, till this moment, how much——

Julia. My dearest madam, do not add to my afflictions!—for indeed they are severe.

Lady Bell. Ungenerous girl! why did you conceal from me your situation?

Julia. Good heavens! is it destin'd that one imprudent step is to lose me every blessing! In the agonies of my heart I flew to your friendship, and you kill me with reproaches.

Lady Bell. And you have killed me by your want of confidence! Oh, Julia! had you revealed to me——

Julia. I dared not; for when Mr. Belville prevailed on me to give him my hand——

Lady Bell. [*Eagerly.*] Mr. Belville! Mr. Belville, say you?

Julia. Yes; it was in Paris we were married.

Lady Bell. [*Aside.*] So, so, so; what a pretty mistake I made!—But it was a mistake.———And so my sweet Julia is married! married in Paris! Sly thing! But how came you at Mr. Beauchamp's, my love?

Julia. In my rash flight this morning, my wicked maid betrayed me into Lord Sparkle's house.—There Mr. Beauchamp snatched me from ruin, and gave me a momentary asylum in his lodgings.

Lady Bell. Did Beauchamp!—But what is his worth and his gallantry to me?—Can't he do a right thing, but my heart must triumph? [*Aside.*

Julia. At Mr. Beauchamp's my husband found me—and found me hid with so suspicious a secrecy! ——Hah! Here comes Mr. Fitzherbert! How can I see him!

Enter FITZHERBERT.

Fitz. My Julia!—My dear Julia!

Julia. Oh sir!——

Fitz. Come, I know all; and to relieve one cause of your distress, will tell you that the lover I shocked you with to-day was only my agent in the little revenge I had resolved to take for your having married, without my consent, the very man for whom all my cares designed you.

Julia. [*Clasping his hands.*] Is it possible!

Fitz. At the moment he left Paris for Florence, you received my directions to return home: thus

Belville's letters missed you, and he remained ignorant that you were in London.

Julia. Oh sir! had you revealed this to me this morning, what evils should I have escaped!

Fitz. My dear girl, I decreed you a little punishment; but your own rashness has occasioned you a severer portion than you deserved.

Lady Bell. But where is the bridegroom! I long to see the necromancer, whose spells can thaw the vestal's heart, and light up flames in the cold region of a monastery.

Fitz. He is without, satisfied from the mouth of Beauchamp of your conduct, [*to* JULIA] and impatient to fold his Julia to his heart.

Julia. Oh sir, lead me to him!—To find my husband, and to be forgiven by you, are felicities too great. [*Exit, led by* FITZHERBERT.

Lady Bell. What a discovery has Julia's marriage made to me of my own heart! I have persuaded myself it knew no passion but the desire of conquest; that it knew no motive to admiration but vanity; but the pangs of jealousy proved to me in one moment that all its sense is love. [*Exit Lady* BELL.

An elegant Apartment, lighted up, Card-parties seen.—Two Servants carrying Refreshments.—A Lady enters from the Top of the Stage, and comes down in a Hurry.

Lady. I protest I have been three quarters of an hour getting from the top of the street to the door!—I really believe, when people give routs, they think more of the bustle they occasion without doors than the company they have within.

Cla. Oh yes! I am quite of that opinion.—The noise and racket in the streets are frequently the pleasantest part of the entertainment; and to plague one's sober neighbours is delightful! Ha! ha! ha! My next-door friend, Mrs. Saffron, always wheels into the country on my public nights,—on pretence

of her delicate nerves; but the truth is, her rooms will hold but six card-tables and nine thirteen.

1st Gent. Well, I protest I wish the ladies would banish cards from their assemblies, and give us something in the style of the *conversaziones.*

2d Gent. Oh no, Sir Charles, that won't do on this side the Alps;—we have no knack at conversation:—we think too much to be able to talk. Good talkers never think. Sir Harry Glare, full of *bon mots*, never thinks.—I myself am allowed to be tolerable, yet I never think.

Cla. Oh, that I believe all your friends will allow.—Hey-day! here comes Lord Sparkle's borough acquaintance, Mr. Pendragon.

Enter PENDRAGON.

Pen. Bobs, Miss Belmour, how d'ye do? I didn't think to see you.—Mr. Fitzherbert brought me here, and I have been examining every face, to see if I knew any body; but fine ladies are so alike, that one must have long intimacy to know one's acquaintance!—Red cheeks, white necks, and smiling lips, crowd every room.

Lady. Hey-day! a natural curiosity!—Pray, sir, how long have you been in the world?

Pen. How long! Just twenty years last Lammas.

Lady. Poh, I don't inquire into your age! How long is it since you left your native woods? Was you ever at a rout before?

Pen. Aye, that I was, last week!—It beat this all to nothing.—'Twas at our neighbour's the wine-merchant's, at his country house at Kentish-town.

2d Lady. Oh lud! I wish I had been of your party! I should have enjoyed a Kentish-town rout.

Pen. Oh, you must have been pleased; for the rooms were so little, and the company so large, that every thing was done with one consent. We were pack'd so close, that if one party moved all the rest were obliged to obey the motion.

Lady. Delightful!—Well, sir——

Pen. We had all the fat widows, notable misses, and managing wives of the parish; so there was no scandal, for they were all there.—At length the assembly broke up.—Such clattering, and squeedging down the gangway staircase, whilst the little footboy bawl'd from the passage, "Miss Bobbin's bonnet is ready!"—"Mrs. Sugar-plum's lanthorn waits!"—"Mrs. Peppercorn's pattens stop the way!" [*Imitating.*

Cla. Oh, you creature, come with me! I must exhibit him in the next room.

[*Exit* CLARINDA *and* PENDRAGON.

Lady. Oh, stay!—Take my card.—I shall have company next Wednesday, and I insist on yours.—He is really amusing! [*Enter Lord* SPARKLE *from the top.*] But hide your diminished heads, ye beaus and witlings! for here comes Lord Sparkle.

Spark. [*Speaking as he comes down.*] I hope the belles won't hide theirs; for in an age where the head is so large a part of the lady, one should look about for the sex.

1*st Gent.* Well, my lord, you see I have obey'd your summons! I should not have been here, notwithstanding Lady Bell's invitation, had you not press'd it.

2*d Gent.* Nor I!—I promised to meet a certain lady in the gallery at the opera to-night,—and I regret that I did not, for I see her husband is here.—Why did you press us so earnestly to come?

Spark. Why, 'faith, to have as many witnesses as I could to my glory!—This night is given by Lady Bell to ME.—I am the hero of the fête, and expect your gratulations. Here the dear creature comes!

Lady BELL *comes down from the top, addressing the company.*

Lady Bell. How do you do?—how do you do? [*on*

each side.] You wicked creature, why did you disappoint me last night? Lady Harriet, I have not seen you this age! Oh, Lord Sparkle! I have been detained from my company by Mr. Fitzherbert, planning a scheme for your amusement.

Spark. Indeed! I did not expect that attention from him; though I acknowledge my obligations to your ladyship's politeness.

Lady Bell. [*Aside.*] That air of self-possession, I fancy, would be incommoded, if you guessed at the entertainment.—Have you seen Mr. Beauchamp?

Spark. For a moment.—But, charming Lady Bell, [*taking her hand*] I shall make you expire with laughing. I really believe the poor fellow explained your message in his own favour, ha! ha! ha!

Lady Bell. Ridiculous! ha! ha! ha!

Enter BEAUCHAMP.

Beauch. Ha! 'tis true! There they are, retired from the crowd, and enjoying the privacy of lovers.

Lady Bell. See there he is! I long to have a little *badinage* on the subject.—Let us teaze him.

Spark. Oh, nothing can be more delightful!—"Hither, sighing shepherd, come!"—Come, Beauchamp, take one last, one lingering look!—sha'n't he, Lady Bell?

Lady Bell. Doubtless,—if he has your lordship's leave.

Spark. He seems astonished!—Ha! ha! ha!—Nay, it is cruel!—If the poor youth has the misfortune to be stricken, you know, he can't resist fate.—Ixion sighed for Juno.

Lady Bell. Yes, and he was punished too. What punishment, Mr. Beauchamp, shall we decree for you?

Beauch. I am astonished! Was it for this your ladyship commanded me to attend you?

Lady Bell. How did I command you? Do you remember the words?

Beauch. I do, madam.—You bid me come this evening, that I might behold you in the presence of the man your heart prefers.

Lady Bell. Well, sir, and now—now you see me!—

Spark. Oh, the sweet confusion of the sweet confession! [*Kissing her hand.*

Beauch. [*Aside.*] 'Sdeath! this ostentation of felicity, madam, is ungenerous, since you know my heart; 'tis unworthy you! But I thank you for it—I have a pang the less. [*Going.*

Lady Bell. Hold, sir, are you going?

Beauch. This instant, madam.—I came in obedience to your commands; but my chaise is at your door, and before your gay assembly breaks up, I shall be far from London, and in a day or two from England. I probably now see your ladyship for the last time.—Adieu!

Lady Bell. Stay, Mr. Beauchamp! [*Agitated.*

Spark. Ay, prithee stay! I believe Lady Bell has a mind to make you her conjugal father at the wedding.

Beauch. I forgive you, my lord.—Excess of happiness frequently overflows into insolence, and it is the privilege of felicity to be unfeeling.—But how, madam, has the humble passion which has so long consumed my life rendered me so hateful to you as to prompt you to this barbarity? I have not insulted you with my love; I have scarcely dared whisper it to myself: how then have I deserved——

Lady Bell. O mercy, don't be so grave! I am not insensible to your merit, nor have I beheld your passion with disdain—But what can I do! Lord Sparkle has so much fashion, so much elegance—so much—

Spark. My dearest Lady Bell, you justify my ideas of your discernment; and thus I thank you for the distinguished honour. [*Kneeling to kiss her hand.*

Enter SOPHY *from the Wing.*

Sophy. Oh you false-hearted man! [*Crying.*

Spark. [*Starting up.*] Hey-day!

Sophy. Don't believe a word he says, for all you are so fine a lady. He'll tell you of happiness and misery, and this, and that, and the other, but 'tis all common-place and hyperbole, and all that sort of thing.

Lady Bell. Indeed! What has this young lady claims on your lordship?

Spark. Claims! Ha! ha! ha! Surely your ladyship can answer that in a single glance. Claims! Ha! ha! ha! Is it my fault that a little rustic does not know the language of the day? Compliments are the ready coin of conversation, and 'tis every one's business to understand their value.

Enter PENDRAGON.

Pen. [*Clapping him on the shoulder.*] True, my lord, true;—and pray instruct me what was the value of the compliment, when you told me I should make a figure in the Guards, and that you would speak to your great friends to make me a colonel?

Spark. Value! Why, of just as much as it would bring! You thought it so valuable then, that you got me a hundred extra votes on the strength of it; and you are now a little ungrateful wretch to pretend 'twas worth nothing.

Enter FITZHERBERT, *leading* JULIA.

Fitz. But here, Lord Sparkle, is a lady who claims a right on a different foundation. She had no election interest to provoke your flatteries, yet you have not scrupled to profess love to her whilst under the roof of her friend, whose hand you was soliciting in marriage.

Julia. Yes, I intreat your ladyship not to fancy

that you are not to break the hearts of half our sex by binding Lord Sparkle in the adamantine chains of marriage.—I boast an equal right with you, and don't flatter yourself I shall resign him.

Spark. Mere malice, Lady Bell! Fitzherbert's malice!——I never had a serious thought of Miss Manners in my life.

Enter BELVILLE.

Belv. What, my lord! and have you dared talk of love to that lady without a serious thought?

Spark. Hey-day! what right have you——

Belv. Oh, very trifling! only the right of a husband—The lady so honoured by your love-making in jest is my wife; in course, all obligations to her devolve on me.

Spark. Your wife! My dear Belville, I give you joy with all my soul! You see 'tis always dangerous to keep secrets from your friends. But is any body else coming? Have I any new crimes to be accused of? Any more witnesses coming to the bar?

Belv. No; but I am a witness in a new cause, and accuse you of loading the mind of my friend Beauchamp with a sense of obligation you had neither spirit nor justice to confer.

Lady Bell. A commission, my lord, which was sent Mr. Beauchamp under a blank cover, by one who could not bear to see his noble spirit dependent on your caprices.

Belv. And when his sentiments pointed out your lordship as his benefactor, you accepted the honour, and have laid heavy taxes on his gratitude.

Spark. Well, and what was there in all that! Beauchamp did not know to whom he was obliged; and wou'dn't it have been a most unchristian thing to let a good action run about the world belonging to nobody?—I found it a stray orphan, and so fathered it.——But you, Fitzherbert, I see are the

lawful owner of the brat; so prithee take it back, and thank me for the honour of my patronage.

Fitz. Your affected pleasantry, Lord Sparkle, may shield you from resentment, but it will not from contempt. Your effrontery——

Spark. Effrontery! Prithee make distinctions!—What in certain lines would be effrontery, in me is only the ease of fashion; that delightful thing, which enables me at this moment to stand serene amidst your meditated storm.——Come, my dear Lady Bell, let us leave these good gentry, and love ourselves amidst the delights of fashion, and the charms of *bon ton.*

Lady Bell. Pardon me, my lord! As caprice is absolutely necessary to the character of a fine lady, you will not be surprised if I give an instance of it now; and, spite of your elegance, your fashion, and your wit, present my hand to this poor soldier, who boasts only worth, spirit, honour, and love.

Beauch. Have a care, madam!—Feelings like mine are not to be trifled with!—Once already the hopes you have inspired——

Lady Bell. The hour of trifling is past; and surely it cannot appear extraordinary, that I prefer the internal worth of an uncorrupted heart to the outward polish of a mind too feeble to support itself against vice, in the seductive forms of fashionable dissipation.

Spark. Hey-day! what, is your ladyship in the plot?

Fitz. The plot has been deeper laid than you, my lord, have been able to conceive. As I have the misfortune to be related to you, I thought it my duty to watch over your conduct. I have seen your plans, which generally tended to your confusion and disgrace; and many of them have been defeated, though you knew not by what means. But what fate does your lordship design for these young people,

decoyed by you from their native ignorance and home?

Spark. Let them return to their native ignorance and home as fast as they can.

Pen. No, no; hang me if I do that!—I know life now, and life I'll have—Hyde-park, plays, operas, and all that sort of thing.—But, old gentleman, as you promised to do something for me, what think ye of a commission?—The captain there can't want his now; suppose you turn it over to me?

Fitz. No, young man, you shall be taken care of; but the requisites of a soldier are not those of pertness and assurance. Intrepid spirit, nice honour, generosity, and understanding, all unite to form him.—It is these which will make a British soldier once again the first character in Europe.—It is such soldiers who must make England once again invincible, and her glittering arms triumphant in every quarter of the globe.

Sophy. Well, Bobby may do as he will—I'll go back to Cornwall directly, and warn all my neighbours to take special care how they trust to a lord's promises at an election again.

Spark. Well, great attempts and great failings mark the life of a man of spirit!—There is *eclat* even in my disappointment to-night; and I am ready for a fresh set of adventures to-morrow.

Fitz. Incorrigible man!—But I have done with you.—Beauchamp has answered all my hopes, and the discernment of this charming woman in rewarding him, merits the happiness that awaits her; and that I may give the fullest sanction to her choice, I declare him heir to my estate. This, I know, is a stroke your lordship did not expect.

Beauch. And was it then to you, sir!—The tumults of my gratitude——

Fitz. Your conduct has completely rewarded me; and in adopting you——

Lady Bell. [*Interrupting.*] Oh, I protest against that!—Our union would then appear a prudent, sober business, and I should lose the credit of having done a mad thing for the sake of the man—my heart prefers.

Fitz. To you I resign him with pleasure: his fate is in your hands.

Lady Bell. Then he shall continue a soldier—one of those whom love and his country detain to guard her dearest, last possessions.

Beauch. Love and my country! Yes, ye shall divide my heart.——Animated by such passions, our forefathers were invincible; and if we would preserve the freedom and independence they obtained for us, we must imitate their virtues.

WHAT IS SHE?

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS,

[by ... mith, Charlotte]

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

DEDICATION.

TO THOMAS HARRIS, Esq.

SIR,

THE formal dedication of so trifling a performance, may, I fear, have the appearance of vanity; and I am perfectly aware, that the suffrage of an anonymous author is of small value, where the esteem of the world has already been so amply and so justly bestowed: but my object in this address is, I trust, more laudable than the indulgence of literary egotism, and more reasonable than the hope that such praise as mine can be of consequence. I wish to persuade writers of better talents, who have a turn for dramatic composition, that the formidable and repulsive tales of delay and difficulty, incident to a communication with managers, are not always to be credited; and that, judging from my own experience, I venture to assure them, they will, in you, sir, find an encouraging candour and politeness, which the timid and inexperienced dramatist will feel how to appreciate, better than any language can suggest. Such a motive will, I hope, plead my excuse; and however I may fail in being useful to others, I have the highest gratification, myself, in an opportunity of expressing those sentiments of respect and esteem, with which I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

And very humble servant.

THE AUTHOR.

May 17th, 1799.

CHARACTERS.

Sir CAUSTIC OLDSTYLE,	*Mr Munden.*
BELFORD (Lord ORTON),	*Mr Holman.*
BEWLEY,	*Mr H. Johnston.*
PERIOD,	*Mr Lewis.*
JARGON,	*Mr Fawcett.*
AP-GRIFFIN,	*Mr Townsend.*
GURNET,	*Mr Emery.*
GLIB,	*Mr Farley.*
Servant.	
Mrs DERVILLE,	*Mrs Pope.*
Lady ZEPHYRINE MUTABLE,	*Miss Betterton.*
Mrs GURNET,	*Mrs Davenport.*
WINIFRED,	*Mrs Litchfield.*

SCENE—Caernarvonshire.

The TIME—From the Morning of one Day, till the Evening of the next.

WHAT IS SHE?

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A small House, with a Garden before it, and a Seat, on which* WINIFRED *is discovered spinning.—In the Front of the Stage a River and a Bridge.—In the back Ground the Abbey, Mansion-House, and a distant View of the Welsh Mountains.*

WINIFRED. [*Singing*]

"She thank'd him, and said, she could very well walk,
For, should she keep a coach, how the neighbours would talk."

HEIGHO! I believe the dismal buz, buzzing of this wheel gets from my ears to my heart. Perhaps, after all, 'tis Mrs. Derville's fault—She is too good, or, at least, too silent for one to be comfortable with her. What signifies her good humour, if she never talks enough to shew it? Ah! if she was but like my poor dear late mistress, Mrs. Everclack! to be sure, she died of a consumption; but, while she did live, it did one good to hear her—so lively, such a charming larum from morning till night.

Enter Lord ORTON [*as Mr.* BELFORD.]

Well, my lord, I'm glad you're returned.

Belf. Hush, hush, good Winifred! You will certainly forget yourself, and call me by this title in Mrs. Derville's presence. But tell me, how has she been in my absence?

Win. Bad enough, I can assure your lordship—Mr. Belford, I mean.

Belf. You make one miserable, Winifred. What has happened? is she ill? is she unhappy?

[*Anxiously.*

Win. Oh, worse! there are remedies for bad health and bad spirits; but that sort of neither one thing or other like feel, I believe the first doctors, or the merriest bells in Caernarvonshire, can't cure it. Lord, we've been as dull as the black mountains.

Belf. You surprise me. Why, I thought Mrs. Derville had been elegant cheerfulness personified; every smile on her countenance seems to declare war against melancholy.

Win. Mrs. Derville, cheerful! Good lack, good lack, what hypocrites we women are!

Belf. Surely, Winifred, you cannot mean Mrs. Derville, she is not—

[*In an accent of alarm and suspicion.*

Win. Yes, but I say she is; and no more like what she seems, than I am to Edward the Black Prince.

Belf. You distract me—Have you perceived any thing improper in Mrs. Derville's conduct?

[*Still in a tone of interest.*

Win. To be sure I have; every moment she passes alone, she grieves, and pines, and sings such woe-begone ditties, 'twou'd make a Turk yearn to hear her. Yet, when she leaves her room, she is as sprightly as the river Dee; smiles like the vale of Glamorgan—in short, she is just what your lord-

ship has been pleased to fall in love with, and to woo in masquerade.

Belf. Extraordinary! And has she always been thus?

Win. Always—from the moment I entered her service, on the death of my late mistress at Leghorn, till this blessed morning, I have never seen her wear a smile, but as a mere holiday dress to meet the world in.

Belf. Incomprehensible woman! Her situation, her mind, every thing about her, is mysterious. Yet my heart mocks at the doubts of my reason, and I have scarcely courage to wish them satisfied—yet I must know more of her, or endeavour to forget that I have known her at all.

Win. Aye, my lord, you're quite right—one can bear to see one's friends miserable; but not to know why, is too much for christian patience. Dear me, how I stand talking here, and have forgot to tell your lordship the news.

Belf. What news? does it concern me? does it relate to Mrs. Derville?

Win. Why, as to concerning my mistress, I can't say; but I'm sure it concerns your lordship to know, that, since you left the village, your sister Lady Zephyrine Mutable, Mr. Deputy Gurnet, her guardian, and a mort of company are arrived at the Abbey.

Belf. Arrived at the Abbey! This is, indeed, unlucky: 'tis impossible, then, I can remain long undiscovered. Yet hold—You are certain you never communicated my secret to any one, and that I am not suspected in the village?

Win. Oh, quite sure—I can keep a secret myself, though, I own, I do like to know other people's. Not a doubt is entertained of your being any thing more than what I have introduced you for to my mistress; that is, as Mr. Belford, a relation of my

own, who has met with misfortunes in trade, and is come here to live cheap, and to seek employment.

Belf. I may yet, then, remain till I can satisfy my doubts, and come to some explanation with your charming mistress. My sister, Lady Zephyrine, was brought up here, in Wales, with her grandmother; and I have been so much abroad, that we have not met since we were children, and should now scarcely recollect each other.

Win. Yes; but then her guardian, Mr. Deputy Gurnet.

Belf. I know he used to transact money-matters for my father, but I have never seen him; and then as for tenants, or servants, you know this estate has lately descended to me; and I have never seen it but in the assumed character of Mr. Belford. But tell me, have you observed nothing which can lead to a discovery of Mrs. Derville's real situation?

Win. No; nor do I know why you persist in believing her higher born than she says she is. I'm sure, now, my mistress isn't half so smart as farmer Gloom, or farmer Hoard-grain's daughters.

Belf. 'Tis the simplicity of Mrs. Derville's dress and manners which distinguishes her from the vulgar. Then such active, and yet discriminating benevolence—such unobtrusive sorrow, such a love of retirement—all mark, at least, an elegant and cultivated mind, if not a noble birth. Unaccountable woman! Then her aversion to marriage, her hatred to mankind——

Win. Why, to be sure, my lord, as I tell her, that's the most unnatural thing—Indeed, I know of nothing more so, except your lordship's expecting my mistress to fall in love with you, under the character of my relation.

Belf. This reserve and mystery of Mrs. Derville, and her avowed hatred of men and marriage, made it impossible to assail her heart in any way but by

interesting her benevolence. She would have feared and avoided me as Lord Orton; but to the poor and unfortunate Belford she listens with kindness.

Win. Yes; with kindness enough to satisfy any reasonable man; and I don't see why your lordship should persist in this project of trying my mistress's sentiments—Love and a cottage against a coach and a coronet. Oh! 'tis too much for poor woman's frailty; and, I declare, nothing but the gratitude I owe your lordship for saving my father's life, would persuade me to become your accomplice. But I hear my mistress. Pray retire a minute.

[BELFORD *retires.*

Mrs. DERVILLE *enters, musing and disturbed.*

Mrs. Derv. [*as she enters.*] Yes, marry—be as miserable as you please—but I will neither be accessary to your folly, nor witness to your repentance. You shall leave me.

Win. What can be the matter? You seem angry, madam.

Mrs. Derv. Oh! nothing unusual—only a pair of idiots conspiring against the peace of their whole lives.—There's Alice says she's going to marry.

[*With painful recollection.*

Win. Lord, ma'am, and if she does, why should that make you angry? I'm sure its quite natural.

Mrs. Derv. So the vicious will tell you are their vices; but our reason was given us to correct them.

Win. I'm sure, ma'am, I never heard that people's reason was given them to prevent their marrying, though it might assist them to repent.

Mrs. Derv. Once more; I'll have no marrying in my house.

Win. Was ever any thing so barbarous!

Mrs. Derv. I'll not have my rest disturbed by the eves-dropping of your amorous clowns, who will

swear and deceive you as systematically as a rake of quality.—But I wonder Belford does not return —Heigho!

Win. I'm glad, ma'am, you make some distinction in your hatred of the sex, however.

Mrs. Derv. Belford, you know, is useful to us; besides, he is your relation, and unfortunate; and I invent little services as a plea for assisting, without wounding him. [*In a tender, melancholy accent.*] Poor Belford has every claim—his manners are superior to his condition; and what is yet more rare, his mind is superior to adversity. [*While speaking,* WINIFRED *goes into the house, and*

BELFORD *enters.*

Well, sir, may I congratulate you? Have you succeeded in obtaining the employment you went in search of? or, if you have not found fortune in quitting our village, I hope, at least, you have found amusement. [*Recovering her gaiety.*

Belf. I am indebted to you, ma'am, for your good wishes; but I return with the unwilling independence of poverty; and, for amusement, surely it is not a pursuit for the unhappy.

[*In an humble and dependent tone.*

Mrs. Derv. [*Gaily.*] Ah! there, sir, you mistake. What fills the haunts of dissipation, routs, balls, theatres? What crowds auctions with those who have no money, or exhibitions with those who have no taste? What are the overflowing audiences of speaking puppets, and dumb-show dramas, what but refugees from the misery of their own reflections?

Belf. Yes, madam; and, I believe, amusement is as often furnished by the unhappy, as sought by them. Lord Cornuto's last *fête*, now, was given only to convince the world, that the honours of his head did not make his heart ache: and Mrs. Forestall's great public breakfast by moon-light, was

merely to ward off the crash of an unlucky monopoly.—Yes, ma'am, the great secret of modern life is appearance—there would be no living without concealing our miseries more cautiously than our vices. [*Forgetting his disguise, and assuming an easy gaiety.*

Mrs. Derv. I fear, sir, your severity is no more than justice: yet, for a person who has not been in an elevated station, you are well acquainted with the follies of one.

Belf. [*Recollecting himself.*] Who so likely, madam, to see the follies of the great, as the tradesman, who makes a fortune by their profusion, or is ruined by trusting them?—Oh! there is a great deal of fashionable knowledge to be acquired between the first humble solicitation for the honour of giving credit, and putting an execution in the house to recover the debt.

Enter GLIB.

What a rencontre! By all that's unlucky, a servant of my father's, who must recollect me.

Glib. Good morning to you, Mrs. Winifred. [*Seeing Mrs.* DERVILLE.] I beg pardon, ma'am; but, hearing the ladies at the Abbey talk of rambling this way, I thought you would like to have notice. Lady Zephyrine, ma'am, and [*seeing* BELFORD] Lord Orton!

Mrs. Derv. I understood his lordship was abroad. [*Not perceiving* GLIB'S *surprise.*

Glib. Hem! I thought so, too. [*To* WINIFRED.] But, if I may believe my eyes, I see——

Win. Well, and what do you see? My brother's wife's first cousin, Mr. Belford. Is that any thing to gape at?

Belf. And now, I recollect, this is Mr. Glib. Nothing can be more lucky. Your mother's brother's wife, at her death, left you a trifling legacy, [*giving*

GLIB *a purse*] which I am very happy in having the honour to remit to you, Mr. Glib.

Glib. 'Faith, I'm my dead cousin's very humble servant, [*aside*] and my gratitude——

Belf. Oh, pray let your gratitude be silent. [*Significantly.*]

[*Mrs.* DERVILLE *goes to another part of the stage, so as to hear, without joining the conversation.*

Win. Well; but what company are arrived at the Abbey? I find there's to be great doings to-morrow on Lady Zephyrine's coming of age.

Glib. Why, at present, there's only Mrs. Gurnet; and the deputy, come down to enjoy himself, as he calls it, though he's more tired of the country already than ever he was of 'Change after dinner-time. Then he fancies, because he's a citizen, that every man who lives west of Temple Bar has designs on his wife; and that all the morality in the kingdom centres in the city. 'Twas but yesterday he quarrelled with Mr. Jargon for picking up Mrs. Gurnet's glove.

Win. Why, I thought he was an admirer of Lady Zephyrine's.

Belf. [*With impatience.*] Is it possible Lady Zephyrine can admit such an admirer? Surely her birth——

Glib. Her birth!—Lord, sir, you talk like one of Queen Elizabeth's maids of honour! Nobody minds these distinctions now. Money—money's your only master of the ceremonies, your usher of black rods and white wands: the Stock Exchange is the Herald's-office.—A well-timbered estate supersedes all the genealogical trees in the principality; and a French cook and a turtle shall bring together the peer of sixteen quarterings and his own shoemaker. It has, however, been reported, her ladyship's complaisance in admitting Mr. Jargon's visits

arises from her having lost a considerable sum to him at play.

Belf. [*With suppressed agitation.*] Distraction!—that my sister—[*aside*] and that the necessity of this fellow's secrecy should oblige me to hear his impertinence. [*Turning to* GLIB.] I thank you, sir, for your very agreeable communications. But, pray, don't let us detain you.

Glib. Oh! I shall vanish.—Has your lordship any commands for the Abbey?

[*Aside, but with a tone of impertinence.*

Belf. [*Aside to* GLIB.] Yes, sir—Silence and a place in my service, or the indulgence of your tongue, and a tour through the horse-pond. You understand me?

Glib. [*Turning to* WINIFRED.] Oh dear! yes—I have the readiest comprehension.—And you, my fair manufacturer of goat's whey, have you any commands?

Win. Yes—silence, and my hand at the parish-church; or a box on the ear—You understand me?

Glib. Oh, yes—But——

Win. What are you debating between then—my lord's service and the horse-pond?

Glib. No, no—certainly not.

Win. What between matrimony and the box o' the ear?

Glib. Well, well—matrimony first, and the rest will follow of course.—But meet me by and by at the next stile, and we'll deliberate on the choice of evils. [*Exeunt* WINIFRED *and* GLIB, *separately.*

Mrs. DERVILLE, *who, during the last part of the scene has sat down, comes forward.*

Mrs. Derv. This man's freedom seems to distress you, Mr. Belford.

Belf. No, madam; I was only reflecting, that, probably, the lady at the Abbey was not very un-

justly pourtrayed by this smart gentleman: for this is one of the cases, where the manners of the artist vouch for the likeness of the picture.

Mrs. Derv. [*With gaiety and spirit.*] Perhaps not, altogether. Lady Zephyrine has beauty, vivacity, and elegance. Yet a votary to whatever is fashionable, anxious for the reputation of singularity; placing her vanity, not in being admired, but in being stared at; and wanting courage to avoid the follies herself, which she laughs at in others. But, with all this, generous and amiable, when she suffers her natural character to prevail over her assumed one.

Belf. She is fortunate, madam, in an apologist: would it were possible to render you as favourable to our sex as you are to your own.

Mrs. Derv. [*Seriously, and then assuming an air of melancholy.*] Be satisfied, Mr. Belford, that I do justice to your worth as an individual; but do not expect me to become the panegyrist of your whole sex—Alas! does the wrecked mariner describe, with a flattering pencil, the rock where his hopes perished?

Belf. [*With warmth and interest.*] Wrecked at the very beginning of life's voyage!—Oh! Eugenia! [*Correcting himself.*] Madam!—Mrs. Derville!—would you but deign to confirm your good opinion of me by explaining the mystery which hangs about you, perhaps the friendship that would participate your sorrows, might alleviate them.

Mrs. Derv. 'Tis mere vulgar affliction which is relieved by communication: but you take this too seriously. [*Resuming her gaiety.*] Come, you know you promised me to superintend our little harvest—I am, as yet, but a novice, and could as soon navigate a ship as regulate a farm.

Belf. [*With embarrassed earnestness.*] I wish my time were of more value, that I might have more merit in devoting it to your service. Tell me,

may I, in return, ask one hour's serious conversation?

Mrs. Derv. An hour!—impossible!—unconscionable! Have I not too many serious hours already?—So, call our reapers together—scold the clowns—and, pray, do not take it into your head that I am some princess tending goats incognita.

[*Exit, singing.*

"*Venus, now, no more behold me.*"

Belf. 'Tis thus she ever eludes any discovery of her real situation; and all I gain by the attempt is a confirmation of that mystery which fills me with doubt and apprehension. I wish Period were arrived—our stratagem will at least assure me of her disinterestedness. Yet he is so whimsical with his double profession of lawyer and author, that I almost fear he may defeat the purpose of his disguise by his absurdities. Yet if Mrs. Derville's mind is vain or interested, the temptations of title and fortune will not be diminished by a little of the ridiculous in the possessor of them. [*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Saloon.*

Lady ZEPHYRINE MUTABLE, GURNET, *and Mrs.* GURNET.

Lady Zeph. 'Twas delightful!—scoured the road, forded a river, took two hedges and a garden-gate, while all the male animals were left behind, gaping, as though they had seen a centaur.

Gurnet. Aye, you make my bones ache with the thoughts on't. I warrant your ladyship shall never get me on a hunter again. Lost my wig, frightened

away my appetite—dogs yelping, puppies sneering —A plague of such sport, where all the glory is, who shall break their necks first.

Lady Zeph. Why, I thought, Mr. Deputy, you told me you had hunted before.

Gurnet. So I have, but not o'horseback. I have been twice at the Bald-fac'd Stag on Easter Monday.

Lady Zeph. What, in a gig, I suppose, crammed with Mrs. Gurnet, all the children, and a plentiful provision of cold ham and cheesecakes.

Gurnet. And very snug too. And let me tell your ladyship, much more becoming than your mettlesome horse, dragoon caps, and rivalship with your grooms.

Mrs. Gur. I beg, Mr. Gurnet, you won't expose us by your vulgarity. The Bald-fac'd Stag in Epping Forest indeed! 'Tis a martyrdom to a person of sentiment to hear you.

Gurnet. And yet I remember, my dear, when you used to make one of five stuffed in a little old chariot of the shape and dimensions of your father's till —and when the hunt was over, you would squeeze down country dances at the Mansion-house, till your face was hardly distinguishable from your best red sattin gown.

Lady Zeph. Now, really, Mr. Gurnet, you have the most uncivil memory. Nobody remembers any thing now, further back than the last year's almanack. Nothing makes more confusion in society than a retrospective head.

Mrs. Gur. Ah! Lady Zephyrine, my nerves were very robust then; but poetry, and the Minerva press, refine the nervous system more than the whole college.—I'm become a mere sensitive plant —pure æther.

Gurnet. Like enough; but if your nerves have kept pace with your size or years, they're not much of the

cobweb kind now; and as for æther—in my mind you partake more of the Dutch fog.

Mrs. Gur. Dutch fog!—Heavens! Mr. Gurnet, will nothing purify the grossness of your ideas?—Was it for this that I addressed my ode to ignorance, to you, in one of the morning papers? And didn't I strive to correct you, by drawing your character as a jealous German baron in my romance of "The Horrid Concavity," or "The Subterraneous Phantoms?" But all my refinement is lost in you, Mr. Gurnet.

Gurnet. No, no! I wish it was, Mrs. Gurnet, I shou'dn't care who found it. But I tell you, Mrs. Gurnet, I'm come here with my ward to enjoy the country and to breathe the fresh air; and it's enough to be awoke in the night with your starting up to scrawl your ideas, as you call 'em, without having my head stunned with your flights by day. 'Slife! one might as well be in the Stock Exchange.

Lady Zeph. Come, come, you must consider the sublimity of Mrs. Gurnet's genius.

Gurnet. What business have women with any genius at all? Have I any genius at all? Let her consider my poor head. I am sure I never argue with her, but I have a whizzing in my ears for four and twenty hours after, as though I had been in the heat of a battle. But now I think on't, how came your spark, Mr. Jargon, not to dine with us to-day?

Lady Zeph. Oh fie!—he has, indeed, under pretext of visiting his uncle, followed me here; but we don't ask such people to our tables.

Gurnet. Not to ask one to your dining-table, whom you admit every night to your card-table?—Gad, that's comical enough!

Lady Zeph. If you had never regarded my instructions, Mr. Gurnet, you would have known that persons of fashion play cards with people at night, they are ashamed to speak to in the morning.

Gurnet. Then I say they're people of bad fashion. In the city, now, we eat with any body, but we play at cards only with our friends.

Lady Zeph. Oh! mere Bank and 'Change notions. People of fine feelings are delicate in their society; but there's no society in a card-table; and the *rouleau* of his grace is neither brighter nor heavier than that of a gambler, or——

Gurnet. Or a swindler. And let me tell your ladyship, that your people of fine feelings are people of coarse morals. And I hope I shall never win a guinea that wasn't honestly got, or elbow a man round a table, whom I cannot shake by the hand in the street.

Lady Zeph. [*Archly.*] Why, really then, your card-parties must be on a small scale.—No gambling; only now and then a snug job in the Alley. No gambling there, guardian, eh?

Gurnet. Your ladyship's a wag—we only speculate; that's not gambling, you know.

Enter JARGON.

Jargon. Ladies, your devoted—I should have darted in upon you earlier—if I had supposed your ladyship ventured to encounter the horrors of the morning's sun.

Lady Zeph. Then you must have darted very soon, for we were out with the hounds before seven—wer'n't we, Mr. Gurnet?

Gurnet. Yes! oh yes! we were out. [*To* JARGON.]—Do you understand any thing of surgery? Can you set a few limbs?

Jargon. What, hunter a little too sprightly?—None of your bowling-green work—Faith! your ladyship's a wonder. Every thing in every place. Why, I have seen you tremble at a bit of a gale in the Park, and swoon after a walk from the auction-

room in Bond-street to Mrs. Puffabout's, your milliners.

Lady Zeph. Why, you wou'dn't have one bring one's opera-house languishing to Caernarvonshire: besides, 'tis gothic to be delicate in the country.—Lady Amazonia Suremark, who would go into hysterics at the sight of a lame sparrow in Hanover-square, will kill you a couple of brace of birds before breakfast in Yorkshire

Mrs. Gur. Elegant! What a subject for a sonnet in the manner of Petrarch!

Jargon. Gad, I like the idea! We'll adopt it, we'll propagate it. It shall be a system, and we'll call it localism.

Lady Zeph. Do you know, Mr. Jargon, when you came in we were discussing two of the most interesting topics——

Jargon. Afflict me with stupidity, but they must be eating or money.

Lady Zeph. You are very near it. Eating and cards.

Gurnet. Yes; and I was saying, that eating's the bond of society, and cards the bane of it.

Jargon. Yes; but does your ladyship know we begin not to countenance eating—don't patronize eating much now—we don't feed voraciously—'tis out.

Gurnet. Here's a fellow! Eating out!—Pray, sir, do you eat in partnership? for I observe you seem to speak in the firm of the house.

Lady Zeph. Oh! don't you know—Mr. Jargon belongs to the order of ridicules?

Gurnet. What! is there more of them? Faith, I thought he'd been the only one of the sort.

Jargon. No—we're very numerous—I'll introduce you.

Gurnet. Introduce me to a society where eating's out! I'd as soon be a capuchin.

Jargon. Our business is to push fashions, oaths, phrases, shrugs, and gestures. Let a mode be ever so ridiculous, stamp it with the name of one of our order, and it passes current. Absurdity, absurdity is the grand secret to which we owe our success.—The first three weeks we sport a thing, it's laughed at; the fourth it's abused, and the fifth becomes general.

Gurnet. But are you never, now, subject to little accidents, such as hooting, pelting, and such sort of familiarities?

Jargon. Why they do quiz us now and then; but assurance does our business. If we were penetrable only five minutes, we should be scouted. So, we never trust dashing a new thing to a member who is not stare-proof. Our propagandists are all bronzed. Face—face is our motto—it's your only system.

Gurnet. Aye, and a very proper one too; for, egad, I believe you're all face, and have neither brains nor hearts. But, odso, Lady Zephyrine, what's become of the young man your father used to praise so? Why, he hasn't been here yet. Is he of the order of ridicules too?

Lady Zeph. You mean Mr. Bewley. [*Aside, and sighing.*] Alas! poor Bewley! That, sir, has been over long since. [*Affecting to recover her gaiety.*] Oh! it's ridiculous enough. You must know, when I first left Caernarvonshire, at my grandmother's death, the gentle swain followed me to town; and, for the first fortnight, we were the Damon and Pastora of all our acquaintance: but I grew ashamed of being laughed at, and the gentleman grew angry with me for being so. And because I happened to go two nights in a week to Lady Rook's, he scolded, pouted, and set off for the country, to weave willows and sigh to the winds.

Gurnet. Nay, I don't wonder he shou'dn't like to trust his dove in Lady Rook's nest.

Jargon. Sighs and winds—tears and streams—

Gad, 'tis quite new—it won't take though. Your great passions are not the system now. We don't patronize the violent passions. [*Sings*] "To the winds, to the waves"——But we must see this Damon of yours—a famous subject for quizzing.

Lady Zeph. [*With a tone of tenderness and dignity.*] I doubt, sir, if Mr. Bewley will renew his visits here. If he does, perhaps it may be charity to warn you that he has courage enough to make his virtues respected, even by those who are too vicious to appreciate them.

Jargon. [*Aside.*] Whew! what, comedy on the stilts of sublime sentiments! All in the wrong system here.

Lady Zeph. [*To* GURNET.] Come, sir, you know you were to attend us on a ramble to the pretty cottagers.

Gurnet. Aye, perhaps I may just step in and take a syllabub.

Mrs. Gur. Well, now I think there's something most romantically interesting in a young woman's living in a farm here by herself, and nobody to know who she is or whence she came. I'm sure there's some mystery.

Lady Zeph. 'Tis vulgar to be curious—and I really know no more than that she is very young, very pretty, and very prudent, and doesn't seem accustomed to the state she is in.

Jargon. What! some farm-yard beauty, fresh from Marybone, come to retrieve. I'll wait on you, ladies, though gallantry's not the existing system—But I love to scamper the rustics.

[*Exeunt Lady* ZEPHYRINE, *Mrs.* GURNET, *and* JARGON.

Gurnet. If I had the making of laws, I think I could twist a system that should scamper you and your fraternity from old North Wales to New South Wales, Mr. Jargon.—[*Yawns*]. Well, 'tis vastly pretty and rural here. Rooks cawing, and lambs bleat-

ing—[*Yawns.*]—I don't know how 'tis, though, but the stillness of the night here prevents me from sleeping. Somehow, when one's in London, the rumbling of the late hackney coaches and early stages, the jingling of the clocks, and the bawling of watchmen, does so lull one, as it were!—[*Looks up.*] Yes, wind's fair for the West-India fleet——hope sugars won't fall though. Bad place for business this too.—[*Looks at his watch.*] But when one's come into the country to enjoy one's self, one shou'dn't be thinking of business. No, I'll have done with Garlic-hill—I'll retire, and end my days in the calm delights of a farm and a dairy. [*Yawns.*] Now, if Alderman Credulous would but pop in, and let one know how things go on in the Alley.—[*Yawns.*] Nothing like rural retirement.

[*Exit, yawning.*

SCENE II.—*A Room at* AP-GRIFFIN'S *House.*

Enter AP-GRIFFIN, *with a Letter in his Hand.*

Ap-Grif. Here's a pretty spark for you! His father mortgaged his estate twenty years ago, and now the law gives me possession, he writes to me about generosity. Aye, aye, when a man gets poor, he always talks a great deal about generosity. But would generosity have built me this house? Would generosity have raised me from sweeping an office to be the master of one? Would generosity have rained a shower of diamonds on my head? [*Takes out a case of diamonds.*]—There, now, was a lucky stroke! Comes an old fellow from the world's end, and before a soul could know who he was or what was his business, dies suddenly in my house with these glitters in his pocket. Now, if I could get rid of them!—Were either of my nephews honest, like myself——But no! Jargon's a rogue, and will cheat me; and Tim Period's an author and a fool, and

will let others cheat him.—Ah! here comes Mr. Generosity.

Enter BEWLEY.

Bew. I have called once more, sir, to request I may remain in Bewley Hall a month longer.

Ap-Grif. It can't be, sir!—law must have its course. Zounds! hav'n't you had time enough?—Hav'n't you appealed, replied, demurred, rebutted? Why, you're the first man that ever thought a Chancery suit too short.

Bew. And you are the first attorney that ever thought one long enough. But you know I have for some time been in expectation of hearing from my uncle in India; and I still hope, through the kindness of my relations there, to be able to redeem my estate.

Ap-Grif. Why you don't want to redeem your estate contrary to law? Hav'n't we a decree in our favour? Besides, one great estate always requires another to keep it up; and if we hadn't foreclosed, possession would have ruined you. So the law only turns you out a little sooner than you'd have turned out yourself. I'm for the just thing—always respect the law.

Bew. Hark you, sir—I'm no more bound by the law to tolerate your impertinence, than you are to possess gratitude or humanity—therefore——

Ap-Grif. I'm gone, sir—off the premises in an instant, though they're my own. So, sir, to avoid ceremony about precedence, here's one door for me, and there's another for you. [*Exit.*

Bew. Well said, old Quitam. This fellow, now, was the son of my father's coachman, and used to crop the terriers, catch moles, and scare the crows off the corn. But hang him, he's beneath contempt! Heigho! what avails wealth to one who has lost the hope of happiness? Oh, Zephyrine!—But I lose

time: I will at least make one effort to preserve her, if not for myself. With her lofty and volatile spirit, expostulation will be useless. No, I'll pique her—alarm her pride by impertinence—excite her jealousy by neglect—and who knows but she, who abandoned me as a rational and tender lover, may take a fancy to me as a rake and a coxcomb?—"*Allons! La feinte par amour.*" [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Before Mrs.* DERVILLE'S *House.*

Enter Lady ZEPHYRINE, *Mrs.* GURNET, *and* JARGON.

Jargon. Really, now, 'twas atrocious and abominable in your ladyship to quit Cheltenham so early.

Lady Zeph. I can assure you, neither the atrocity nor abomination of quitting Cheltenham [*in a ludicrous tone, in imitation, but not absolutely mimicking* JARGON] is imputable to my inclination But you know my rich uncle, Sir Caustic Oldstyle, after a family quarrel of twenty years standing, has just emerged from his Cornish estate, and is coming to visit us. My father and Sir Caustic, though nearly of the same age, had the difference of a century in their manners. Lord Orton lived like his cotemporaries—my uncle like his ancestors; and I believe nothing but the death of Sir Caustic's only son would ever have reconciled him to relations who are so degenerate as to think and act like other people.

Jargon. What a loss he has inflicted on the fashionable world!—Why, your ladyship has scarce time to systemize the summer costume.

Lady Zeph. Oh, yes!—As soon as the dog-days began, I took care to introduce the Kamschatka robe, the Siberian wrapper, and the Lapland scratch.

Mrs Gur. Well, I declare your ladyship has the most elegant imagination; though it is sometimes a little at variance with our climate.

Jargon. O, no woman of spirit ever thinks about

climate or seasons—gauzes, muslins, cobwebs, in winter—furs, gold lace, and velvets in summer—'tis the system.

Lady Zeph. Ha, ha!—don't you remember how poor old Mrs. Parchment [*mimicking the appearance of a person cold*] used to be shivering through a frosty night and a thin opera, in a silver muslin, with her arms squeezed to her sides, and the natural crabbedness of her features improved by angular contractions, till she gave one the idea of a petrified mummy?

Jargon. Yes; and when the cold drew tears from her eyes she pretended it was the effect of music on her sensibility.

Lady Zeph. Then, there was poor Lady Lovemode got a quinzy by going to see the skaters in Hyde-Park in an Otaheite chemise.

Jargon. But where's this queen of curds and whey? This is the door, I suppose. Come, let's scatter the country folks. I love to make the hobnails stare. [*Knocks at Mrs.* DERVILLE'S *door.*] Holloa! here—Cuddy—Bumpkin! Is nobody at home?

Mrs. DERVILLE *comes out.*

Mrs. Derv. Lady Zephyrine, I hope nothing's the matter—your servant has so alarmed me——

Jargon. Servant! Faith, that's queer enough. Why, what the devil ails me? I hope I'm not such a quiz as to be ashamed. [*Apart.*

Lady Zeph. You must excuse my friend, Mr. Jargon, here; he's a little rude; but it's his system.

Mrs. Derv. At least, madam, 'tis systematic; for when gentlemen adopt the dress of their grooms, 'tis very natural the manners of the stable should accompany the wardrobe.

Jargon. [*Aside, while Mrs.* DERVILLE *talks to Lady* ZEPHYRINE.] Severe enough that! Bright eyes, sar-

castic style—just the thing for a Faro-table. Now, if I could but take her to town, puff her, patronize her, she'll make me famous in a week.

Mrs. Gur. [*To Mrs.* DERVILLE, *in a romantic tone.*] Well, but really, young woman, I can't think you were born for the station you appear in. I should like to hear your history. Nay, if you will, I'll write—four volumes, interspersed with pieces of poetry—call it translated from the German—'twill be delightful. I have a moonlight scene, a dungeon, and a jealous husband—all ready done.

Mrs. Derv. [*Gaily.*] Oh! my history, madam, is the history of every body; and for that reason, nobody would read it. [*Ironically.*] 'Tis so common for men to be base, and women weak, that the vices of one sex, and the follies of the other, are subjects for jests and *bon mots* rather than history.

Jargon. Faith, this girl's an original. I'll negociate with her, take her to town, and bring her into fashion.

Lady Zeph. Hush! what young man's that crossing the field?

Mrs. Derv. 'Tis Mr. Bewley, ma'am.

Jargon. By all that's queer, the weeping lover, the willow-weaver!—Come, Lady Zephyrine, a compassionate glance at least. [*Sings.*]

"Ah, well a-day, my poor heart!"

Mrs. Gur. I shall like to see him of all things. I do so doat on a melancholy lover.

Lady Zeph. Poor Bewley! how shall I sustain his sighs, his reproachful looks, his despair?—Would I could avoid him.

Enter BEWLEY, *singing negligently, as if he did not perceive Lady* ZEPHYRINE.

Bew. "Merrily, merrily shall I live now!"—— [*To Mrs.* DERVILLE, *with an airy volubility, and an affectation of fashionable ease.*] What! my charming

neighbour!—*La belle voisine!*—Ah! Lady Zephyrine!—I beg pardon—I didn't see you. The sun, you know, is apt to dazzle one's vision. I fear I am not *en regle*. I ought to have left my card at the Abbey; but the very morning your ladyship arrived I had promised to give the Miss Strongbows a lesson on the kettle-drum, and they have kept me at the lodge ever since. 'Tis the very palace of Armida, the grotto of Calypso—no escaping.

Jargon. [*Aside.*] Psha! here's pining and willow-weaving! Lucky enough though—clenches my business with her ladyship.

Lady Zeph. [*With an air of pique.*] I confess, sir, the Abbey would have been a gloomy exchange for an enchantress's palace.

Bew. Nay, 'pon honour now, you wrong me. I was absolutely dying to leave my name with your ladyship's porter; but these country belles, when they get hold of a man that's a little followed—[*conceitedly.*]—not that I pretend—they're quite unconscionable.

Jargon. What, you are a favourite here! a sylvan deity! and all the Welsh Daphnes pulling caps for hur, look you!—[*Mimicking the Welsh dialect*].—This is better than sighing to the winds, Lady Zephyrine.—Come, Mrs. Gurnet, you doat upon a melancholy lover—Here's your man.

Bew. Fie! fie! shou'dn't boast—for its no sooner known that a couple of dear creatures are civil to one, than one's besieged by a whole bevy.—Apropos! did you see my little marquise at Cheltenham? I'm a downright inconstant there.—Lady Zephyrine, you must make my peace for me. You know a little inconstancy is but venial in the code of gallantry.

Lady Zeph. [*Apparently mortified.*] Oh, sir! I'm too much a stranger, both to your gallantries and yourself, to be a competent mediator.

Bew. A stranger! your ladyship's pleasant. I thought we had been old acquaintance.

Lady Zeph. [*Coldly.*] Sir, you are so unlike the Mr. Bewley I once knew——

Bew. As your ladyship is to your former self; but you're quite right—nothing so stupid as the sameness and constancy of an old-fashioned lover. Why, there's more variety in the imagination of a Dutch poet.

Jargon. Gad, you're correct—exactly correct—we scout it—it's quite out.

Bew. Yet, here's Mrs. Derville would tempt one to forego the doctrine. One might be her slave till constancy became the mode.

Lady Zeph. [*Aside.*] I can support this no longer. Mrs. Derville, it grows cool—we'll bid you good evening—Mrs. Gurnet, Mr. Jargon, will you accompany me?

Mrs. Gur. I'll glide after you in an instant—I have just finished a sonnet to the screech-owl, and 'tis the most pathetic thing——

[*Exeunt all but* BEWLEY, *Mrs.* DERVILLE *attending them.*

Bew. [*Alone.*] Thank Heaven, the task is so far over. But Mrs. Derville is too amiable to be trifled with. I'll after her, and explain my conduct.—Oh, Zephyrine! how much has it cost me to wound even your pride? Yet if I can, by this innocent artifice, awaken her to a sense of her own dignity, and snatch her from the abyss of this ruinous dissipation, whatever fate awaits myself, I will meet it without repining. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE.—*Lady* ZEPHYRINE'S *Dressing-Room.*

Lady ZEPHYRINE *and* MIRROR *discovered.*

Mrs. Mir. It is very lucky your cousin left these clothes here; they fit your ladyship exactly.

Lady Zeph. You think, then, Mrs. Derville will not discover me.

Mrs. Mir. That she won't, if your ladyship does but talk loud, stare at people, yet pretend not to see them, and behave rude; there's no fear but she'll take you for a modern fine gentleman.

Lady Zeph. Yes, I cannot doubt but this village wonder, this Mrs. Derville, is some adventurer, perhaps placed here by Mr. Bewley, at any rate the object of his attention; and under this disguise, and the assumed title of my brother Lord Orton, I hope, by professing a passion for her, at least to ascertain her sentiments with regard to him.

Mrs. Mir. Ah, my lady! I remember when poor Mr. Bewley began courting your ladyship in the nursery, by teaching your birds to sing; and though your ladyship being rich has a right to be fickle-minded, I can't think that Mr. Bewley——

Lady Zeph. Yet his visit last night was plainly intended for Mrs. Derville—he hung on her looks while he scarcely deigned to regard mine.—But have I not deserved this, and is not my present meanness less excusable than my past folly?—Oh, Bewley! how easily might I have avoided the errors I find it so difficult to retrieve. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Mrs.* DERVILLE'S *House.*

Mrs. DERVILLE *at a Table, drawing.—On one Side of the Stage a Closet, with a Door, and a Window projecting into the Room.*

Mrs. Derv. [*Throwing down the pencil.*] It doesn't signify—'tis in vain to attempt any thing new—this obstinate pencil of mine is continually multiplying the same resemblance—profile—three-quarter full-face—still the same features—yet 'tis singular—such animation—such sensibility—a poor relation of Winifred's too——Heigho!—I believe the house is now quiet, and I may venture to try the effect of my harp in dissipating a melancholy of which I dare not ask myself the cause. [*Enters the closet.*

SONG.—[*Written to a French Air.*]

"Je crus tous mes beaux jours."

Heart, I thought thy peace was flown,
Joy and hope for ever gone;
Reason's help I ask'd in vain;
Time, friendly healing,
Softens each feeling,
And peace and hope return again.

Tranquil hours! how short your stay!
Sorrow still hung o'er your way;
Time his aid but lent in vain:
Love softly stealing,
Points new each feeling,
And sighs and tears return again.

While Mrs. DERVILLE *is singing,* BELFORD *enters with Papers in his Hand.*

Belf. Enchanting woman! Still do I hover about her; still live but in her presence, who, perhaps, be-

holds me with indifference, or confounds me with the objects of her hatred. Yet, no; she who inspires a passion like mine cannot herself be insensible—Oh, Eugenia! if I am not deceived—if I am happy enough to have created an interest in your heart, I swear, whatever your fate, nothing shall separate it from mine—my hand—my rank—but she comes. [*To Mrs.* DERVILLE.] I have executed your little commission, madam, and have brought you the papers you desired.

Mrs. Derv. You are very exact, Mr. Belford.—[*Gives* BELFORD *some papers; he appears agitated.*] Shall I trouble you, sir, to look over these accounts—I am so ignorant of business—Heavens! what's the matter! You seem ill—you seem disordered.

Belf. I confess it—I am at this moment so agitated, that I own I am incapable of obeying you.

Mrs. Derv. [*In an accent of kindness.*] Nay, 'tis of no consequence—compose yourself, Mr. Belford, I intreat you—I asked your assistance as a friend, and surely didn't mean to impose a task on you—Speak, sir, you alarm me!

Belf. [*Still agitated.*] Madam—Eugenia.

Mrs. Derv. Tell me—what means this agitation? Have you any thing to impart to me?

Belf. Oh, I have indeed, if——

Mrs. Derv. [*With eagerness.*] Speak, then—am I not—your friend?

Belf. [*Aside.*] How shall I begin?

Mrs. Derv. [*To herself.*] Oh, my fluttering heart!

Belf. [*Aside.*] Yet, should I be deceived—Let me dissemble a moment if it be possible. [*Recovering himself.*] I wished, madam, to consult you on a subject which distresses me more than I can describe. You have been so kind, have appeared to take such an interest in my fate, that I venture to intrude on you a confidence——

Mrs. Derv. [*Anxiously.*] Go on, I intreat you.

Belf. The old relation you have heard me speak of, and on whom I depend to retrieve my affairs——

Mrs. Derv. Well, and——

Belf. Has persecuted me to marry.

Mrs. Derv. [*Tremulously.*] To marry! You to marry!

Belf. Yes, madam; me.

Mrs. Derv. [*With an air of pique.*] And so you are come to consult me about it?

Belf. Yes, madam; I thought, perhaps—

Mrs. Derv. [*Resentfully, yet affecting indifference.*] Oh, Heavens! in these cases people have nothing to do but to take their own counsel. [*With volubility and assumed pleasantry.*] I dare say now your uncle has discovered you have a fancy for some farmer's daughter—very young, very blooming, very silly, and very credulous, whom you will adore the first month, neglect the second, and abandon the third. —'Tis all in the usual course of things—nothing extraordinary in it; and I wonder you should come to consult me about such trifles.

Belf. Yet hear me.

Mrs. Derv. [*Rapidly, with a tone of irritation.*]— Oh! it seems the very dæmon of matrimony possesses the whole principality—Every body talks of marrying. Marry, marry then, I beg you, sir, and leave me in peace.

Belf. Reflect a little, madam, that if I were so entirely decided, I should not consult you. Believe me far from desiring such a marriage, I have ever opposed it, and my unwillingness originates in a passion which is at once the delight and torment of my life—a passion I have never yet dared to disclose.

Mrs. Derv. [*More composed.*] That, indeed, is different—You love, then, my friend?

Belf. [*Passionately.*] Yes, I love, madam; ardently love a woman that I do not yet know; but who, by being known, can only be more adored. [*Mrs.*

DERVILLE *listens with agitation.*] A woman whose sense and sweetness would have captivated my heart, though it had not already been subdued by her personal attractions—A woman, all charming, in whom there is nothing to regret, but the profound mystery which envelopes her—A mystery, which might appear suspicious, did not the circumspection of her conduct bid defiance to calumny—did she not nourish a prejudice against mankind, which, while it guards her own reputation, is the despair of those who aspire to touch her heart—a prejudice, of which I am myself the first and most unfortunate victim.

Mrs. Derv. [*Half gaily.*] Do you know, sir, that you are an orator? absolutely eloquent.

Belf. Oh! I could speak still better, would the woman I love but deign to answer me.

Mrs. Derv. [*Confused.*] Perhaps the answers which reach the ear are not always the most expressive.

Belf. [*Taking her hand.*] Doubtless not—and if I dared to believe—to hope ——

Mrs. Derv. [*Half archly.*] Come, release my hand, and tell me—is this fair one that won't answer rich?

Belf. She is for me—and it is this consideration which restrains me—Alas! my ruined fortunes are unworthy of her.

Mrs. Derv. [*Feelingly.*] You deceive yourself. Our sex are naturally tender and generous.—And I know those, to whom a lover sincere and affectionate, and unhappy, would be more formidable than the splendid homage of the first prince in the world —But alas!

Belf. Proceed, I conjure you.

Mrs. Derv. [*With an accent of depression.*] But where find such a lover, such sincerity? Where is the man that has not to reproach himself with the misery of woman? Is there a female, who has not, some time in her life, been the victim of her sensibility?—[*Becomes impassioned as she proceeds, and ends*

almost in tears.]—Yet, you wonder that we become false, dissipated coquettes, and sometimes worse. Warm, enthusiastic, we fancy life a path strewed with roses. We expect to find nothing but happiness and integrity.—At an age when our hearts are tender, and our reason weak, we make that choice which is to fix our destiny for ever—and she who, perhaps, might have lived in the bosom of peace and virtue, had she been fortunate in her first affections, irritated and degraded by the conduct of a seducer, devotes herself to all the vices which his example has taught her—and thus revenges her own wretchedness wherever her charms procure her dupes or victims.

Belf. [*Alarmed.*] Oh, misery! is it possible you can have been exposed to these horrors?—

Mrs. Derv. [*With dignity.*] No, sir; I have nothing to reproach myself with. 'Tis this consoling idea of my own innocence, which has supported and still supports me under my misfortunes. [*Feelingly.*] Yet the deceit, neglect, ingratitude I have experienced—Oh, sir! you know not what I have suffered.

Belf. Speak, then—deposit in the bosom of friendship this sorrow, so inconceivable to all the world. Never will I———

Mrs. Derv. I believe you; this dislike to society—this gay misanthropy, to which, however, I owe the little repose I have long felt, yields to the tender interest you have inspired. Learn, then, I am not what I appear—I was once——

Enter WINIFRED.

Belf. Cursed interruption! at such a moment too!

Win. Dear ma'am, here is Lord Orton just arrived from abroad; he's been strolling about among the tenants, and desires to see you. [*Aside to* BELFORD.] It's your friend Counsellor Period, I suppose, in masquerade.

Mrs. Derv. Surely, there's no necessity for my admitting him. What can his business be here?—am I ever to be persecuted?

Win. Oh, he's your landlord, you know, ma'am, and Lady Zephyrine's brother. I must ask him in.

Mrs. Derv. Well, well, if I must——

[*Exit* WINIFRED.

But pray, Mr. Belford, do you entertain his lordship while I compose myself a little, our conversation has so agitated me. [*Exit.*

Belf. [*Alone.*] How unlucky that Period should come at this juncture, and without apprizing me of his arrival. Our stratagem, too, now seems unnecessary, [*doubtfully*] I am—at least, I think I am, nay, I ought to be satisfied—Mrs. Derville—is every [*with the air of the man endeavouring to believe what he wishes*] thing I can desire—Why, then—Yet, as Period is here, he shall make this one trial, and then—I bid adieu to doubt for ever.

Enter Lady ZEPHYRINE *as Lord* ORTON.

Confusion! [*With a gesture of surprise.*] Why—What! this is not Period—'Sdeath! what can it mean? Oh! I have it—Some friend, I suppose, whom he thinks will act the part better than himself. Yes, yes, it must be so; Mrs. Derville, sir, will be here in an instant.

Lady Zeph. [*Confused.*] Sir, I—I—

Belf. I say, sir, Mrs. Derville will wait on you immediately. [*With a tone of intelligence.*] But how is it that Mr. Period has entrusted our scheme to you? Is he arrived? Is he in the village?

Lady Zeph. [*Perplexed.*] Really, sir, I don't understand you. A scheme—a Mr. Period—Upon my word I know no such person—I presume you are informed my name is Orton?

Belf. Yes, yes; a peer of my friend Period's making. You see I know the whole plot.—However, I

find you can keep a secret; but there's no occasion to keep a man's secrets from himself. You understand what I mean?

Lady Zeph. [*Surprised.*] How the deuce shou'd I? What do you take me for a necromancer, a conjuror?

Belf. Why, I tell you, I know the whole story. You have assumed the title of Lord Orton, and are come in this disguise to discover Mrs. Derville's real character and sentiments.—Now are you satisfied?

Lady Zeph. [*Alarmed and confused.*] Heavens! I am discovered. Well, sir, as you seem acquainted with my disguise, you, perhaps, would not advise me to proceed. Shall I?—ought I?

Belf. By all means.—As you've gone so far, make this one trial. But are you sure you have all the story? Remember, you fell in love with her at Florence, followed her to Leghorn, surprised to find her here—Be sure you act your part well.

Lady Zeph. Why, the man's certainly mad—Either a poet or a speculator—But I'll e'en profit by his instructions. Oh, don't fear—nothing so easy to imitate as a modern beau. You know it requires no talents.

Belf. Take care though not to shew we have any intelligence together.

Lady Zeph. [*Archly.*] Certainly—certainly—She shall not suspect any intelligence between us.—Besides you may contrive to quarrel with me.

Belf. Hush! here she comes.—Now don't forget Florence, Leghorn, and the little marquis.

Enter Mrs. DERVILLE.

BELFORD *retires a little in the back ground.*

Mrs. Derv. [*With a serious but easy manner.*] To what, my lord, am I indebted for the honour of this visit? Has your lordship any directions to give concerning the farm?

Lady Zeph. [*Affecting surprise.*] Excuse me, ma-

dam, this rencontre is so unexpected, so transporting, so superlatively fortunate; so, so surprising, that I am unable to explain, but another time, a more favourable moment——

Mrs. Derv. [*Looking attentively at Lady* ZEPHYRINE, *discovers her.*] Yes—the voice, the features—I can't be mistaken—This is some trick of Lady Zephyrine's—Nay, then, her ladyship shall, for once in her life, hear a little truth. [*Turning to Lady* ZEPHYRINE.] I can assure your lordship I am not a little surprised myself at your sudden arrival—I believe it was quite unexpected, though long, very long necessary.

Lady Zeph. How, madam! I hav'n't heard of any accident.

Mrs. Derv. [*Seriously.*] Yes, my lord, the worst of accidents. The peace, the reputation of a sister is in danger.

Lady Zeph. In danger! I thought the character of Lady Zephyrine——

Mrs. Derv. Yes; perhaps the same rank which renders her imprudence conspicuous, may protect her reputation; but what shall secure her peace?—A worthy youth deserted—her fortune the prey of a gambler, or fatally redeemed by her hand. Oh! Lord Orton, what have you not to answer for, in having selfishly sought your own amusement, while destruction has hovered over those most dear to you.

Lady Zeph. Yes; I confess the conduct of Lady Zephyrine has been culpable—Oh, how much so! But surely the character of her brother, Lord Orton, [*confused, as forgetting herself*] that—that is, of myself, is without reproach.

Mrs. Derv. It is not enough, my lord, for the great to be without reproach, they should deserve praise. Fortune has given the world a claim on them; and the very virtues of the indolent are pernicious.

Lady Zeph. You preach so charmingly, that I believe you'll make me a convert—And I'll engage that whenever I reform, Lady Zephyrine will do so too. [*Gaily.*] Heaven knows she needs it.

Belf. [*Comes forward.*] Of the actions of Lord Orton I am not qualified to judge; but Lady Zephyrine shall not be attacked by a male slanderer, though he were her brother.

Lady Zeph. [*Aside, as supposing his anger to be feigned, to promote the deception.*] Very well indeed! You act passion admirably.

Belf. 'Sdeath, sir, I am serious. Another time your calumnies shall not pass.

Lady Zeph. [*Still supposing his passion affected.*] When you please, sir—Sword or pistol—I'm your man—hit you a side curl at fifty yards.

Belf. [*Aside.*] A few hours hence, and nothing shall restrain me. [*To Lady* ZEPHYRINE.] Sir, you shall repent this.

Lady Zeph. [*Aside to* BELFORD.] Admirable!—never saw passion better acted—Now an oath or two.

Mrs. Derv. [*With an air of pique.*] Belford so zealous a champion for her ladyship—nay, then, I'll punish him—There's no consistency in man. [*In a coquettish manner.*] Come, my lord, I entreat you, drop the matter. Your lordship's existence is too valuable to be risked for or against trifles.

Belf. Furies! she's coquetting with him! [*To Mrs.* DERVILLE.] I'll endure this no farther.—[*Formally.*] Madam, have you any farther commands?

Mrs. Derv. No, sir: and really his lordship is so pleasant——

Belf. That you wish for no additional society. I'm gone, madam. [*At the side of the stage, while going off.*] Sorceress! But an hour ago such fascinating tenderness! such angelic candour! and now co-

quetting with a coxcomb before my face. Yes, I rejoice that I did not discover myself—Oh, woman! woman! [*Exit* BELFORD.

Lady Zeph. [*In a romantic tone.*] Ah, madam, you see before you the most miserable of mankind! the most faithful, the most ardent, the most sentimental, the most——

Mrs. Derv. [*Aside.*] Ridiculous! how shall I contain myself?

Lady Zeph. [*Kneels.*] Madam, I have so long adored you, [*aside*] bless me, I forgot to ask how long—Then, hav'n't I pursued you from—[*aside*] [Heavens! I have forgot where] Oh! from Florence to Leghorn—from Leghorn to England, and from—

Mrs. Derv. [*Agitated.*] Alas! then I am betray'd!

Lady Zeph. Oh, no, ma'am—indeed I'll never betray you.

Mrs. Derv. But, by what means came you acquainted?——

Lady Zeph. Oh! I'm acquainted with all—not forgetting the little marquis—[*Archly.*]

Mrs. Derv. I conjure you, my lord, in pity, tell me who informed you of all this?

Lady Zeph. [*Aside.*] Truly, that's more than I know myself. How shall I get off? [*Turning to Mrs.* DERVILLE.] Excuse me—I dare not enter into explanations at present. I have the most powerful reasons for avoiding it. But meet me near the hermitage, about seven, and you shall be satisfied. In the mean while, tell me, I conjure you, have I not a rival? Is not Mr. Bewley a favourite rival?

Mrs. Derv. [*Aside.*] Ah! now the mystery of her ladyship's visit is out. [*To Lady* ZEPHYRINE.] No, my lord—Mr. Bewley is, I fear, too, too firmly attached to one who, having deserved to lose his heart

by her folly, may, perhaps, expect to regain it by unworthy artifices, and——

[*A noise and voices are heard without.*

Lady Zeph. [*To Mrs.* DERVILLE.] I hear voices at the door—Permit me to escape on this side the village. I have particular reasons.

Mrs. Derv. This way, then, my lord.

[*Mrs.* DERVILLE *goes out with Lady* ZEPHYRINE.

SCENE III.—*Near Mrs.* DERVILLE'S *House.*

Enter Sir CAUSTIC OLDSTYLE *and* PERIOD, *in travelling Dresses.*—PERIOD *with a Port-folio.*

Period. Why, I tell you, sir, it's the luckiest event of my whole tour between London and Caernarvonshire.

Sir Caustic. Lucky, you verbose coxcomb. [*Petulantly.*] Hav'n't we been overturn'd? wasn't I jamm'd under you and your port-folio, and your bag of briefs, till I can't feel the difference between my flesh and my bones? [*Mimicking.*] And now you tell me it's lucky—it's the very thing you wished.

Period. And so I did, to be sure. Here I'm come on a tour from London to North Wales, and hav'n't yet met with a single anecdote, not even one accident; no, not so much as a spoil'd dinner, or a sprained ankle—Nothing to describe, but turnpikes and sign-posts—Hav'n't I a hundred pages, all as dull as a great dinner? Then, you know, we may indict the road.

Sir Caustic. No, puppy, we can't—The road was good enough—Wasn't it Molasses the great West-Indian's chaise and four overset us, as he was scowering along to bid for the estate that Sir Plinlimmon Pedigree lost last week at the hazard table?

Period. And what signifies? You were only overturn'd a quarter of a mile on this side the Abbey, instead of driving up to the door—Then, 'twill make such a figure in my travels back again. Why, here's a farm-house; nothing ever was so fortunate —we go in, sit down to dinner—eggs and bacon—barn-door fowl and greens just ready: coarse but clean cloth; sentimental farmer's wife; tears of sensibility on our part; curtsies and sympathy on hers. —Where's my pencil? Such language, such style! Thank ye, Mr. Molasses—'tis the luckiest circumstance for a travelling author to be overturned.

Sir Caustic. Here's a flourishing rascal! There happened to be but one pair of horses at the last stage, and finding we were going the same road, I offer him a place in my chaise without knowing even his name; and, now we've nearly got our necks broke, he tells me 'tis the luckiest circumstance. Aye, aye; this comes of your modern improvements —in my time people travelled with dignity and sobriety—none of your nick-nack springs and prancing steeds.

Period. Yes; then the vehicle resembled the lac'd waistcoat of the owner, large, rich, and heavy; while the very horses seemed to feel their importance, and moved like elephants in a procession. But then there were no tours or tourists, nothing but poor stupid selfish people, who only travell'd about their business, instead of being philanthropists like myself, and travelling to amuse the whole world.—Ah! yonder's my friend Belford—I'll just speak to him, look to the baggage, and be with you in an instant. In the mean while repose yourself at this farm-house, and don't forget the barn-door fowl, and the sentimental hostess. Oh! I'll describe them in such a style! [*Exit.*

Sir Caustic. [*Always in a tone of petulance.*] And what should they travel for; to write nonsense, and

set other blockheads a gadding after them.—A plague of your new-fangled notions and refinements! A fellow, now, that ought to be nail'd to his counting-house, from one year to another, like a sheet almanack, jumps into a carriage, kills horses, and breaks people's necks, that he may get in an hour sooner to an opera dancer, or a gaming table.

[*Exit into Mrs.* DERVILLE'S.

SCENE IV.—*A Room in Mrs.* DERVILLE'S *House.*

Enter Sir CAUSTIC, *Mrs.* DERVILLE, *and* WINIFRED.

Mrs. Derv. I hope you're not hurt, sir——

Sir Caustic. Why, no; I believe the trunk and limbs of the old tree have escaped safely; and I have been weather-beaten about the world too long to mind a little scratching on the bark.

Mrs. Derv. I'm sure, sir, you must have been greatly alarmed; let me prevail on you to take some refreshment.

Sir Caustic. [*Looking at her attentively.*] I thank you—I thank you—I hav'n't had so much civility without paying for it, since I left Cornwall.

Mrs. Derv. [*With warmth.*] Then, I'm sure, sir, you have not before had occasion for it—Never did misfortune appeal in vain to the hearts of my countrymen.—If you are rich and prosperous, perhaps you may have met with imposition, flattery, or selfishness; but had you been a poor and friendless stranger, a thousand hands had open'd to relieve you—a thousand hearts have given you the tribute of sympathy and compassion.

Sir Caustic. Well, I'm glad to hear you say so: I know, in my time, we were a generous nation; but I see such changes, such carving and gilding, such

polish and ornament, that I hav'n't yet been able to examine whether the good old oak remains sound at heart.—I'm not, you see, of the newest cut, either inside or out, and I can only tell you I love kindness, and not the less for being set off by a pretty face.—Surely, I think, I have seen you before; were you ever in Cornwall?

Mrs. Derv. No, sir.

Sir Caustic. Then I'm mistaken—for you are too young even to have been born before I retir'd there.—May I ask your name, young gentlewoman?

Mrs. Derv. Derville, sir.

Sir Caustic. And your situation.

Mrs. Derv. Not affluent, sir; but equal to my wishes.—I rent this small farm under Lord Orton.

Sir Caustic. Why, then, you can tell me a little about my niece; is she worth an old man's travelling from the land's end to see?

Win. Lord, sir, she is——

Mrs. Derv. Hush!——Lady Zephyrine, sir, is young, gay, and elegant—a little lively, but I'll answer for the goodness of her heart.

Sir Caustic. [*With warmth and severity.*] Yes, but do you mean a good heart, as good hearts us'd to be fifty years ago—now women may betray their husbands, abandon their children—yet have delicate feelings; shrink from the name of vice, and have the best hearts in the world.

Mrs. Derv. You mistake me, sir—Lady Zephyrine——

Sir Caustic. Yes, yes; I know your modern ethics, your splendid vices—your good hearts that ruin more tradesmen than all the swindlers between Hyde Park and Whitechapel—They won't do for me, I tell you.

Mrs. Derv. Do not let your prejudices make you unjust, sir—in spite of the gaiety of Lady Zephyrine's manners—her feelings—her sensibility——

Sir Caustic. There again—her feelings—her sensibility—[*In a tone of petulance.*]—What, I suppose she sighs over the distresses of a novel—wipes her eyes while a ghost in an opera comes out of his tomb to accompany the orchestra; but is shock'd too much at real misery to suffer its approach, and avoids sickness and poverty as though she herself were not human. These fine feelings won't do for me—has my niece benevolence and common sense? I want none of your foil and tinsel qualities.

Mrs. Derv. Indeed, sir, you'll find her very amiable.

Sir Caustic. Nay, I own I have seen a picture of her, and have left her half my fortune, merely on the credit of her simple dress and modest countenance—her grandmother wrote me word two years ago, that she was the only young woman in the principality uncorrupted by modern modes, and London manners.—But come, I'm now sufficiently recovered, and if you'll let your damsel shew me the way, I can reach the Abbey—thank you, fair lady, for your kindness; and if you'll permit an old man's visits—

Mrs. Derv. I do not often mix in society, sir, but the respect I feel for you—This way, sir, let us assist you.

[*Exeunt Mrs.* DERVILLE *and* WINIFRED, *shewing Sir* CAUSTIC *out.*

SCENE V.—*In the Country, near the Village.* BELFORD *and* PERIOD *in Conversation.*

Belf. And you absolutely know nothing of this coxcomb, who personated me at Mrs. Derville's?

Period. Not a syllable, my lord, nor did I intend any coxcomb but myself should have that honour. Why, an action will lie at common law, and I'll so exhibit the fellow in my tour——

Belf. A truce with your law and your literature, and devise what's to be done. I dare not think of it; yet is there too great cause for suspecting that Mrs. Derville is herself in concert with the impostor, and that he is a favour'd rival.

Period. If she has promised you marriage, you may bring an action against her as soon as the wedding is over—or you may be revenged by a satire—and in either case, the Court of Common Pleas, or the Court of Parnassus—I'm your man.

Belf. Torment and furies! Will you be serious for a moment?

Period. Hav'n't I been serious my whole tour? Hav'n't I been reduced to transcribe doggrel from the country church-yards, and dates from the doors of alms-houses? and now you tell me I'm not serious.

Belf. I wish, then, your tongue were as barren of words as your head of ideas. Once more, can you suggest how we may discover this adventurer, this pretended Lord Orton?

Period. Really I can think of no better plan than for me to personate his lordship, as we first proposed. Say that my letters and baggage have been stolen, and insist upon it that the thief must be the impostor she received at her house.

Belf. But what purpose will this answer?

Period. Why, I shall judge by her manner if she is really privy to the deception.

Belf. You are right. Nay, you shall get yourself installed at the Abbey—pretend a passion for her as we originally plann'd, and if she stands the test, and clears up the mystery of her conduct, I will offer her my hand, and throw aside my doubts for ever.

Period. And I'll draw up the marriage articles, and relate the whole history in my travels. For if you know any little secret history of a friend, always publish it; nothing sells like private anecdote.

Belf. O, tell as many anecdotes as you will; all I desire is, not to be favoured with them gratis—So, meet me at my lodgings an hour hence, and I'll give you farther instructions for your reception at the Abbey.

Period. Yes; but will it be possible to impose on Lady Zephyrine and Sir Caustic?

Belf. On Lady Zephyrine perhaps not—but I'll give you letters, in which, without explaining my reasons, I shall apprize her of my return, and engage her for a few hours to favour the deception. You must, however, take care to see her alone on your first arrival—As for Sir Caustic, as I have never seen him, with her ladyship's assistance, it will be very easy to prevent any suspicion on his part.

Period. There's one thing, my lord, I had forgot. I've an old uncle in the next village, and if I meet him we shall be discovered.

Belf. Oh! your peerage will not last so long as you might be making your maiden speech—and it's not likely he will see you at the Abbey, still less at Mrs. Derville's. Yet stay; a thought has just struck me, but 'tis mean, detestable.—But then does not the mystery, nay, the conduct of Mrs. Derville justify me.—No matter—if she loves me, love will plead my pardon; if not, even her anger will scarcely add to my wretchedness. By means of my intelligence with Winifred, I can get concealed during your first interview.

Period. 'Tis eaves-dropping, my lord, and liable to an action. However, as you please; and I think your lordship is authorised to take down the evidence in short-hand.

Belf. Adieu! In an hour I shall expect you. My doubts and anxiety are worse than conviction: and I can endure this suspense no longer. [*Exit.*

Period. [*Taking papers out of his port-folio.*] And

now for my notes—Saw—yes—saw trees by the road side; whether oaks or apples, not quite sure.—Saw between—Zounds! 'tis very hard, when a man travels on purpose to write, that he can see nothing but what other people have seen before him! Hold, though—[AP-GRIFFIN *enters and listens behind.*]—Saw between Cum Gumfred and Aberkilliguen, young goats, an old fox, and a Welsh ass.

Ap-Grif. Eh! my nephew Period! How the devil came you to be ass hunting in Wales, when you should have been braying yourself at Westminster Hall? What business have you to be engrossing here by the road side, when you should be taking notes at the Old Bailey.

Period. Why, now, don't be choleric, uncle; don't irritate the blood of the Ap-Griffins—I'm only [*aside*] 'Slife! what shall I say? I'm on the circuit—I'm on a tour—I'm going to publish "Travels in North Wales," and I thought [though it isn't absolutely necessary] I might just as well take a peep at the country, before I gave an account of it.

Ap-Grif. Zooks! hav'n't you done with your nonsense yet? Why, when I was in London, your chambers were beset with printer's devils, bringing proof sheets, as you call'd them, of your "Tour to Wandsworth; with Remarks during a Voyage to Battersea." Ads-death! is this the way to rise at the bar? to advertise yourself running about on a Tom fool's errand, as if nobody could see mile-stones and church steeples but yourself.

Period. Why, if I have but a name, what signifies how?

Ap-Grif. Yes, yes; I see you're incorrigible—just as you were when you carried your briefs and your tours in the same bag to the Old Bailey, and astonished the court by beginning a flowery descrip-

tion of Botany Bay, instead of a defence of petty larceny.

Period. I tell you, a professional man's nothing if he doesn't write—Don't all the physicians who have nothing to do at home travel abroad, and write themselves into practice? Don't the clergy write themselves into livings? and don't the lawyers write plays and pamphlets till they get briefs?

Ap-Grif. Eh, jackanapes! Did Hale ever rise by scribbling farces and tours, eh?

Period. Hale! dry—dry; dull as the *bon mots* of a newspaper. Language, sir—nothing will do now but style. Only—only let me be Lord Chancellor, and you shall see Hale, and Bacon, and Littleton, and Coke, as much out of fashion as their own wigs and whiskers.

Ap-Grif. You reprobate, I shall see you hangman first.

Period. Oh! I'll so reform the dissonant language of the law—then you shall see reports measured into blank verse—Briefs like the descriptions of the moon in modern romance, and chancery suits in the style of Gibbon.

Ap-Grif. Here's an unnatural coxcomb! Here's a profane rascal! wants to violate the venerable obscurity of the law.

Period. Then I'll have none of your John Does and Richard Roes—your Nokes and your Styles. Law shall be a comment on history and poetry. As thus—"Brutus *versus* Cæsar"—"Pan *versus* Apollo"—or in a conspiracy, "Menelaus, and others, *versus* Paris."—I'll explain the rest another time.—Bye, uncle.

Ap-Grif. How I could twist the profligate's neck! Why, sirrah, you're not leaving the country without letting me know how you came, and where you are going, and——

Period. [*Aside.*] An inquisitive old blockhead, plague of him! If I tell him I'm going to the Abbey, he'll follow me, and spoil our scheme. I won't hear him. [*Going.*

Ap-Grif. Why, sirrah, I say, how came you here? Where are you going?

Period. I hav'n't time to tell you, now. I'm in haste. I must be brief—Good bye, uncle, good bye!

Ap-Grif. What, you keep me here an hour, prating with your Pans and your Cæsars, and now you're in haste—I must be brief, uncle, [*mimicking him*] I must be brief—Answer me, I say, or I'll crack—No, your skull's crack'd already—but I'll beat you, till you shall be of as many colours as a mildew'd parchment.

Period. Psha!—tiresome! You must know, then, that I came here with an old gentleman that's rich enough to buy the principality. I'm now going to dine with him at the next town, and then we set off in a chaise and four, for—for—for the Chester assizes.

Ap-Grif. Rich, did you say? And do you know him?

Period. Oh, yes! We've been hand and glove these three, ay, these seven years. He's the most comical old fellow—continually in a passion through pure benevolence; and is out of humour with all the world, merely because he thinks it neither so good nor so happy as it was fifty years ago.

[AP-GRIFFIN *debating with himself, and standing between* PERIOD *and the way he was going.*

Ap-Grif. Gad, a notion is just come into my head—Now, if I could but trust him, perhaps this rich stranger would buy the diamonds; and I do so long to get rid of them. Then, if this fellow here should cheat me—but no; the whelp's honest—A little wrong above, [*pointing to his head*] but sound

enough below [*pointing to his heart.*] Nay! I'll e'en trust him. [*Altering his tone.*] Well, Tim, I believe I must forgive thee, thy tours, and thy whims. I'm sure thee art an honest lad after all.

Period. What does the old crocodile mean now?

Ap-Grif. Dear Tim, it's just come into my head that you can do a little job for me—can you be secret?

Period. As a chamber counsel.

Ap-Grif. Can you be honest?

Period. Ah! thank ye; am I not your nephew?

Ap-Grif. Hum—Nay, I don't doubt your honesty—even a lawyer, you know, shou'dn't cheat his own flesh and blood. Always do the just thing, Tim, when it's not against the law. Why, I've got some jewels here to dispose of for a client—Mind, they're not my own—Now, don't you think your rich fellow-traveller might purchase them? Here they are.

[*Takes out the jewels, and gives them to* PERIOD.

Period. They're rich enough for the great Mogul. The gentleman's old, and, perhaps, may not care for them; but I'll try, if you will——

Ap-Grif. Do, then, my good lad [*in a doubtful wheedling tone.*] I know, Tim, thou'lt be honest.

Period. Oh, if you doubt it!

Ap-Grif. No, no; I don't doubt. But I may as well go along with you to the gentleman.

Period. 'Twill be too far, sir—Pray don't attempt it.

Ap-Grif. No, no, it won't—I can walk, Timmy, I can walk.

Period. [*Aside.*] Zounds! what an old torment it is! Indeed, sir, 'tis too far; so, if you can't trust me, take the diamonds again.

Ap-Grif. Why the deuce can't you let me go with you? If you won't, I'll follow you, and offer them to a gentleman myself.

Period. 'Sdeath! what shall I do? I must even tell him partly the truth—only, instead of an inno-

cent frolic, I'll say I'm engaged in a bit of roguery, and then he'll be sure to keep my secret.

Ap-Grif. What are you muttering? Come, let's set out. I thought you were in a hurry.

Period. So I am; but——

Ap-Grif. But what!

Period. Ha ha! its comical enough too—it will make you laugh. Why, you must know, I'm going to the Abbey with the gentleman I have been telling you of, and I have pass'd myself upon him for Lord Orton. Nobody here knows his lordship's person; so I'm to marry, in his name, a great heiress that's just come down on a visit. Isn't it a special project? Isn't it a good thing?

Ap-Grif. [*Alarmed.*] Oh, yes; a devilish good thing. [*Aside.*] I wish I had my diamonds again, though, honest Tim.—[*To* PERIOD.] Udso, I had forgot—give me the case—there's a ring wanting.

Period. Give it me, then, and I'll wear it—as I am to personate a lord, you know.

Ap-Grif. But, now I think on't, I don't know what to ask: so I'll stay till Ephraim Lacker, the Jew, comes this way.

Period. No, uncle, no; I understand diamonds, and understand you—You're afraid to trust me; but I'm a very honest fellow, though I'm your nephew. I shan't, however, part with the jewels; for, now you have my secret, I'll keep them as hostages for your secrecy; so come to the Abbey this evening, inquire for Lord Orton, and you shall have either the diamonds, or the value of them.

Ap-Grif. Well, then, I'll keep your secret—but, remember now, Tim, honesty's the best policy—always do the just thing. Hark ye, though, what new freak's this? I see you've got a cockade in your hat.

Period. To be sure—why, I'm in the volunteers.

Who so fit to fight for the laws as those who live by them? [*Exit* PERIOD.

Ap-Grif. If I had known, though, that this fool had improv'd so much by my counsels as to be such a proficient in knavery, I wou'dn't have trusted him.—A little roguery's a very good engine to employ against others; but we always view it with virtuous indignation when it may be turn'd against ourselves. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Music-Room at the Abbey.*

Through Doors. PERIOD *as Lord* ORTON, *Sir* CAUSTIC OLDSTYLE.

Sir Caustic. And why the deuce didn't you tell me on the road, that you were my nephew?

Period. And how shou'd I know I was your nephew, unless you had told me you were my uncle?—To say truth, however, I did suspect it, and only had a mind to surprise you agreeably.

Sir Caustic. [*Ironically.*] Yes, yes——I'm very agreeably surpris'd. I wish I was in Cornwall again, though 'twere at the bottom of a tin-mine. The transition from soft sea breezes to the keen air of these Welsh mountains would throw some people in a consumption; now, I plainly perceive, it will give me the jaundice—I hadn't been here an hour before one begins ringing rhymes in my ear, till she's as hoarse as a drill serjeant. Another stuns me with inquiries, about the price of turtle and consols. Yet my own niece is not visible, as they call it.

Period. Sir, it's the custom amongst people of rank to——

Sir Caustic What, to be visible every where, and to every body, but at home, and to their own relations? A plague o' such customs.

Period. They're very necessary, sir, for people in a certain style—myself, for example. Were husband and wife, father and son, uncles and nephews, to have free access to each other, 'twou'd occasion more practice than we shou'd get through, if courts of justice were as numerous as gaming-houses, and term to last all the year.

Sir Caustic. Get through in the courts, I don't understand you.

Period. For instance now—there was a Crim. Con. cause, where I pleaded for defendant.

Sir Caustic. You pleaded!

Period. Yes—[*recollecting himself*]—in the house, you know, as a peer.

Sir Caustic. Plead for the defendant in a Crim. Con. cause! Here's morality!

Period. But hold—I had forgot my commission. You old-fashion'd people love magnificence more than convenience. Now, if you are fond of diamonds, and want to make a purchase, here are some. Do look at 'em—they're the prettiest rings.

Sir Caustic. Not I—A man should be asham'd to wear a diamond on his finger, while there's an industrious hand wants employment, or a disabled one, relief. But let's see 'em; perhaps my niece may have a fancy to some baubles. [*Taking them.*] Why, sure—No, it can't. Why, yes—They are the very family jewels lately sent me by one of my friends, now abroad, for his nephew, young Bewley. Tell me how you came by them.

Period. [*Aside.*] Here's an anecdote! What the devil shall I do? Old nunc has certainly stole them. [*To* OLDSTYLE.] Sir, 'tis a commission of delicacy; and we never betray a client's, that is, a friend's secrets.

Sir Caustic. Yes, but I must know—there's some villany in this business.

Period. I'll warrant there is.

Sir Caustic. These diamonds were certainly consigned to me by my old friend, as a present to his nephew, and for the purpose of redeeming a family estate out of the claws of an old rogue of an attorney.

Period. [*Aside.*] Aye, aye, that's uncle sure enough.

Sir Caustic. When I left Cornwall, having some inquiries to make in London about my deceased son, and the case being urgent, I dispatch'd a trusty agent with the diamonds; but, notwithstanding my repeated inquiries, I have never heard of either diamonds or messenger. All that I know is, that the young man, who was then from home, never received them.

Period. I assure you, sir, they came fairly into my hands, whatever roguery they may have encountered before; but do you keep them, and——

Sir Caustic. Yes, but the person who entrusted them to you!

Period. He'll be here this evening, and you shall see him. [*Aside.*] Get the old shark off though, if I can.

Enter Lady ZEPHYRINE *and* GURNET [*through Doors.*]

Lady ZEPHYRINE *dressed in the Extreme of the Fashion.*

Lady Zeph. You're welcome to the Abbey, sir. Believe me, I am rejoiced to see you well, and in this country.

Sir Caustic. Thank you, thank you, ma'am. I suppose my niece will be here by and by—though, methinks, she's not over civil.

Gurnet. Why, this is my ward.

Period. Yes, sir, this is my sister.

Sir Caustic. It isn't, nor it can't, nor it shan't be.

You, my niece Zephyrine Mutable! What! this, I suppose, is one of your agreeable surprises, too?

[*To* PERIOD.

Lady Zeph. Really, sir, this is so strange!

Sir Caustic. Strange! Aye, strange indeed. Let me see. [*Looking in his pocket, takes out a picture, returns it, and takes out another.*] No! that's not it—Oh! Here it is—Here's a picture of my niece, done only two years ago; and you're no more like her than I am to Tippoo Saib.

Lady Zeph. The miniature, I presume, sir, which was sent you to Cornwall before my grandmother's death?

Period. Oh, the want of likeness, sir, is nothing. These cursed painters only think of making what they call a good picture; and whether it resembles you or your horse, is no concern of theirs. Why, you might have had what they call a portrait of Lord Orton only three months ago, and it mightn't be like me the least in the world—I appeal to Lady Zephyrine.

Sir Caustic. Zooks, sir, but did you ever know black ringlets change to auburn? Then, instead of the clear brown lively complexion of my niece, a dead white stucco; [*looking at the picture*] and, for the cheeks, egad the amateur has outdone the artist, and the rosebud is become a downright piony.

Lady Zeph. Perhaps, sir, my exterior may deserve this censure; yet, I trust, I have a heart which will not be found unworthy of your affection.

Sir Caustic. Why then, I wish pretty women with worthy hearts wou'dn't deform the index to them.

Lady Zeph. But fashion, sir—

Sir Caustic. Don't talk to me of fashion. Will you, or any woman in these days, ever be as handsome as your grandmother? And did she rouge, and varnish, or wear a red wig? I detest your modern whim whams.

Period. Modern, sir! Why the ladies all dress now *à l'antique*—Gone back two thousand years at least. Nothing but Portias and Lucretias, from St. James's Square to St. George's Fields.

Sir Caustic. Aye, aye; as absurd as they are licentious, and they hav'n't even discernment to see that their follies are a satire on their vices. There's Mrs. Gadfly, who gets rid of her children to a nurse as soon as they're born, and to a boarding-school as soon as they can speak, trusses and twists her head up to imitate the mother of the Gracchi!

Period. 'Faith, it's very true—Then, there's the fat, giggling widow, who married her butler three weeks after her husband's death, wears a black wig *à la Niobe.*

Lady Zeph. Come, sir, forgive me for not being so old or so handsome as my grandmother; and let me shew you our improvements.

Sir Caustic. I've seen too many of your improvements already; however, I'll accompany you, because, in my time, attention to women was the fashion.

Period. [*Aside.*] Now, if I could borrow this miniature of Lady Zephyrine, it would certainly convince Mrs. Derville of my being the real Lord Orton. Sir Caustic, will you oblige me with Lady Zephyrine's picture for a few hours? I've a friend hard by, who copies admirably.

Sir Caustic. [*Gives the picture.*] Here—But hark ye. Hadn't your friend better just take a peep at the red wig? [*Going.*]

Period. Stay, Sir Caustic, you have lately received letters from India. Cou'dn't you now assist me with some little domestic anecdote of the Bengal tyger, or the amours of Tippoo Saib, or some secret history of a nabob, just to embellish my tour?

Sir Caustic. Tippoo Saib, nabobs, and Bengal

tygers, in a tour to Caernarvonshire! Why what the devil shou'd they do here?

Period. Introduce them—perfectly apropos. I see a palace by the road side newly built—half a dozen farms turn'd into a park—immorality plenty; provisions scarce. I conclude, of course, I am in the vicinage of a nabob: then pop comes in the secret history, and Tippoo Saib, and the Bengal tyger, by way of episode.

Sir Caustic. Why, if you could make this rambling mania serve to expose the danger of over-grown, ill-spent fortunes, perhaps I might be tempted to take a frolic with you myself.

[*Exit, leading Lady* ZEPHYRINE.

Period. And now for my attack on the fair cottager. Sorry to leave you, deputy; but if you want amusement, I'll lend you my manuscript, or my Tour to Wandsworth.

Gurnet. No, I thank your lordship; I'm just going to take a peep in the butler's pantry, and I can't say I'm much of a reader—never buy any books. I gave sixpence once for a Treatise on Corn Cutting; and instead of finding any thing to the purpose, there were politics enough to crack the clearest head in Lombard-street.

Period. Yes, it's our way. When we want to push a subject, we give it a taking title; no matter whether the book contains a word that answers to it, or not. [*Exit* PERIOD.

Gurnet. A pretty sample of nobility, this: begins making love to my wife, before he'd got his boots off; and I've already found 'em twice closetted together from poetical sympathy, as Mrs. Gurnet calls it. Just now, too, I overheard them make an appointment, under pretence of reading their productions in the Park; but I'll after them—prevention is better than remedy. These whirligig chaps think if a man lives east of Charing-Cross, he's made for

nothing but cuckoldom and gluttony, though egad the line of demarcation has long been past, and I don't see but horns and turtle are as much the fashion in the west as in the east. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A Parlour at Mrs.* DERVILLE'S.—WINIFRED *pushing* BELFORD *into a Closet at the Extremity of the Scene.*

Win. There, there, you'll be safe enough; my mistress never uses this closet; and, to make sure, I'll lock it, and take the key—I wish though my lord had done with his trials and disguises; he'll certainly get me into some scrape at last. Oh! how your people of fine notions torment themselves. [*Exit.*

Enter PERIOD *as Lord* ORTON, *and Mrs.* DERVILLE.

Mrs. Derv. Nay, then, I acknowledge, my lord, that I do know the person who assumed your name; but, as I am certain he could have no concern in the theft of your letters and baggage, you must excuse my betraying him.

Period. [*Affecting passion.*] Alas! madam, these are trifling considerations; but if you knew how deeply I am interested in discovering an impostor, who, I fear, is a fortunate rival——

Mrs. Derv. Rival, my lord! If you have no further commands, permit me——

Period. Commands, madam! No! I have to supplicate, to tell you, that I have long admir'd, long ador'd you. Did you but know how I have pursued you; from Florence to Leghorn; from Leghorn to London; and from London to Caernarvon; but you'll know it all when you read my tour, and I'm sure you'll admire the style, and pity the author.

Mrs. Derv. [*Ironically.*] Why, I must confess,

your lordship seems in a state deserving of pity. How you became acquainted with these circumstances, I am at a loss to guess; but if this is not some new artifice, and you are really Lord Orton, I trust you will not avail yourself of a situation, you perhaps know, is unfortunate, to insult me.

Period. I insult you, ma'am! I never insulted any one in my life, except a coffee-house critic. Surely you cannot suspect my honour, or doubt my rank. I have this moment left the Abbey. Then there's my sister's picture. [*Giving her the picture.*] Let that convince you—have compassion on my sufferings, madam—I'll draw you up such a settlement—I'll dedicate my work to you—I'll——

[*Mrs.* DERVILLE *takes the picture carelessly; but on looking at it, nearly faints.*

Mrs. Derv. Tell me, my lord—I conjure you by your dearest hopes. Tell me how you came by this picture?

Period. 'Sdeath! what's all this? That picture, ma'am—that picture—Why, ma'am, to say the truth, it's not mine; it's my uncle's, who is now at the Abbey.

Mrs. Derv. Permit me to keep it a few hours. It was once mine, and is not the portrait of Lady Zephyrine. Look at it, [*shewing the picture*] it's of the utmost importance that I should see the owner.

Period. Now I recollect, I saw the old gentleman with two pictures, and he has, by mistake, given me the wrong one. [*Looking at the miniature.*] No, no; this is certainly not the lady with the red wig, and—

Enter WINIFRED.

Win. Ma'am, here's Mr. Jargon, Lady Zephyrine's suitor, at the door, and he's so rude, he protests he must see you, and have an answer to his letter.

Period. [*Aside.*] Zounds, what that rascal, my

cousin Jargon! Nay, then, I must vanish. Will you give me leave, ma'am, just to slip up the chimney, or out at the house top, or into the clock-case, or under a cheese-press? I have such reasons, 'sdeath, I wou'dn't, for my peerage, be seen by this fellow.

Mrs. Derv. Well, you may go this way, my lord; I shall be releas'd from him at any rate. [*Shews* PERIOD.] Yes, this Jargon sent me an impertinent letter this morning, and I'll see him; for, though Lady Zephyrine's conduct towards me has been unworthy, yet, if I can, by convincing her of the baseness of her pretended lover, save her from the ruin of such an union, it will repay me for the momentary indignity of his addresses. Winifred, you may shew Mr. Jargon in. [*Exit* WINIFRED.] Alas! I had hoped the situation I have chosen would have serv'd me from being thus persecuted. Belford, too, so warm an advocate for Lady Zephyrine, and so long absent—Heigho!

Enter JARGON *and* WINIFRED.

Jargon. Faith, ma'am, you're so snug, and as difficult of access as a poet in debt; I've been arguing with the tongue and the claws of your Welsh dragon here this half hour.

Win. Dragon, indeed! A conceited, ugly fellow. [*Exit.*

Jargon. Well, what say you, my little original? What do you think of my proposal? A house in Marybone, a black boy, and a curricle—None of your old-fashion'd, mysterious work; nobody now do any thing they're ashamed of, or at least are not asham'd of any thing they do—an opera-box next my wife [that is to be] Lady Zephyrine—a Faro-table—then our whole order in your train—puff you in the papers—[*takes out a glass*] stare you into notice at the theatre, you'll make such a blaze.

Mrs. Derv. [*Aside.*] Oh! patience—But I'll have

my revenge, and for Lady Zephyrine's sake. 'Tis impossible, sir, for me to treat your generosity as it deserves, till I have had a little time to reflect. But if you'll meet me at eight this evening in the Hermitage, you shall receive my answer. This key, which the steward lends me during the absence of the family, will admit you. At present I must intreat you to depart.

Jargon. Oh, oh! she parleys—Yes, yes, ma'am, —give you time—all fair, that I see you understand business. No Philandering—'tis not our way. Negociate—dispute term—offer our ultimatum—sign the treaty, and heigh for the black boy and curricle!

Mrs. Derv. I must beg, sir, at present, that you'll retire.

Jargon. I'm gone. Won't interrupt your reflections. Oh! I'm a made, a complete made man. Such a decoy for a Faro-bank! [*Exit.*

Enter Mrs. GURNET.

Mrs. Gur. [*In a flippant familiar manner.*] Pray excuse this intrusion, my dear. A countryman told me just now I should find Lord Orton here, and we are going to have the most delightful literary ramble in the Park.

GURNET *entering with* WINIFRED.

Gurnet. I tell you they're both here; I watched 'em in. Why, you rural go-between, I'll have you put in the stocks—sent to the house of correction. So, so, Mrs. Muse, I've found you, have I? This comes of your sentiments—your odes—your pastorals—But I'll search out your Apollo—I'll have a divorce, if it's only to warn other men of the danger of rhyming wives, and the iniquity of travelling authors and tour-mongers.

Mrs. Gur. Mr. Gurnet, you make me blush for

the coarseness of your ideas. You ought to know, that the little platonic attachment between me and Lord Orton does you honour.

Gurnet. Oh! what assurance reading and writing gives a woman! If you hadn't been a poet and an author, you'd have had some shame—Shan't escape though. I'll ferret out your platonic Apollo, I warrant. [*Looks about, and stops before the closet where* BELFORD *is.*]—Aye, I have him—here he is. Open the door, I say!

Mrs. Derv. Sir, this violence——

Gurnet. Out of the way, thou village handmaid of iniquity! Where's the key? I'll have him out!

Mrs. Derv. Open the door, Winifred, that I may be released from these insults. I assure you, sir—

Win. [*Aside.*] Blessed St. David! what shall I do? Lord, ma'am, I can't find the key! and the gentleman ought to be ashamed to make such an outcry in a modest house. Why, there's nothing in the closet but wool.

Gurnet. [*Shews a part of* BELFORD'S *coat.*] Then the wool has manufactured itself into cloth; for I'll swear here's a piece of a man's coat between the door. Now what say you, Mrs. Modesty?

Win. Then I'm sure the fairies have been here.

Mrs. Derv. What can this mean? Let the door be opened this instant.

Win. Well, if I must—I believe, for my part, the house is haunted. [WINIFRED *opens the closet door, and discovers* BELFORD.

Enter Sir CAUSTIC OLDSTYLE, *who speaks from within.*

[*The surprise and confusion of Mrs.* DERVILLE *should appear as the effect of shame at detection.* BELFORD *turns against the scene in agitation.*

Mrs. Derv. Heavens! Mr. Belford!

Mrs. Gur. Why, this is the most mysterious event!

Gurnet. What's this one of your Welsh fairies? or is it another of your platonic attachments, Mrs. Gurnet?

Mrs. Derv. Cruel, ungenerous Belford!

Sir Caustic. What, a man hid in my pretty cottager's closet! I came here to thank you for your kindness this morning, and to escape for a moment the dissipation of a fashionable family in retirement; but I see licentiousness is not confined to the mansions of wealth. Adieu, young woman. I had hoped to find in you one who had preserved, with modern elegance of manners, a simple and uncorrupted heart. Perhaps the time may come when you may grow tired of that vice for which you do not seem intended; and in the hours of sorrow and the pangs of repentance—remember—you have a friend. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Derv. Stop, sir!—Oh, how shall I survive this humiliation!—[*To* GURNET.]—For you, sir——

Mrs. Gur. Yes, you indelicate monster!—This comes of your gross suspicions. But I'll write a romance on purpose to expose you. I'll make you an epitome of all the German barons and Italian counts. I'll—— [*Exit.*

Gurnet. And I'll secure myself from a platonic cuckoldom in future. I'll take you to Garlic-hill, and there you shall fast from pens, ink, and paper as long as you live. So, come along, and let's get out of rural felicity and the delights of retirement.

[*Exit Mrs.* GURNET.

Belf. Before you go, sir, let me exculpate—'Sdeath! they're gone, madam! I feel too much the cause you have for resentment to attempt any justification. Yet, be assured the conduct to which I have descended is punished, cruelly punished, by

this fatal conviction, that I am doomed to love where I cannot esteem. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Derv. [*After a moment of agitation, turns to* WINIFRED.] Treacherous, ungrateful girl! you who have witnessed my hours of sorrow and seclusion, have seen with what solicitude I have avoided mankind. If your heart is not entirely corrupted, you will feel with remorse the complicated disgrace and wretchedness in which you have involved me.

Win. I'm sure, ma'am, I didn't mean——

Mrs. Derv. Well, I shall not reproach you: but my resolution is taken. The only further service I require of you is to prepare for my leaving this place to-morrow morning.

Win. Oh, ma'am! surely you won't leave the farm, and the stock, and the cows, and the poultry?

Mrs. Derv. Argue not, but obey me. I'll now keep my appointment with Lady Zephyrine, that I may at least explain my own conduct, if not reform hers. Did you send my note to Mr. Bewley?

Win. Yes, madam—he received it two hours ago.

Mrs. Derv. Then this picture.—I'll see the stranger at the Abbey, learn how it came into his possession, and then bid adieu for ever to a scene in which my innocence could not protect me from shame and misery. Oh! never let the humble votary of retirement seek it near the contagious abode of riches and dissipation. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Park or Pleasure-Ground.*

Enter BELFORD.

Belf. Yes, this is the place—I can't have mistaken. Jargon must pass this way to the hermitage; and if he is not as cowardly as he is base, I shall at once revenge the perfidy of Mrs. Derville, and prevent his designs on my sister. Oh! Eugenia, thou hast made my life of so little value, that I do not hesitate to risk it, even against that of a coxcomb—But I hear footsteps.

[*Retires as behind the trees.*

Enter Lady ZEPHYRINE.

Lady Zeph. Well, if she does but come, I shall enjoy her confusion at finding her gallant peer dwindled into a spinster; she's here—And now for my triumph over this little prude with her heroic sentiments and her closetted heroes.

Enter Mrs. DERVILLE.

You seem in search of somebody, ma'am.

Mrs. Derv. [*Distinctly, and with dignity.*] I am, madam; I came in search of a female, who was once a model of feminine excellence—As lovely in her mind as her person; but who, seduced by dissipation, dazzled by splendour, and perverted by vanity, abandoned the object of her first affections, degrades her family, and sullies her reputation by becoming the dupe and the victim of a—gambler.

Lady Zeph. [*Confused.*] Enough, madam—Hold! I——

Mrs. Derv. Nay, this is not all. In the wanton-

ness of an unfeeling prosperity, either curious or jealous, forgetting the dignity of her rank and the delicacy of her sex, she came, in a mean disguise, to assail with the temptations of affluence and vice the integrity of an—inferior.

Lady Zeph. [*Mortified.*] Oh! spare me, spare me! I intreat you.

Mrs. Derv. And if unaware of the artifice, dazzled by the title she assumed, or allured by the offered prospect of wealth and pleasure, the rectitude she attacked had proved too weak for the combat—O ungenerous, unworthy triumph! to have found that a poor, friendless, unprotected woman had yielded to the same temptations which, under all the advantages of birth, fortune, and surrounding friends, have alienated the affections and corrupted the heart of Lady Zephyrine Mutable——

Lady Zeph. Forgive me, you have taught me a lesson which that heart will never forget. From this moment I relinquish my assumed follies, and dare to be myself.

Mrs. Derv. Yes, Lady Zephyrine, I'm persuaded you were designed by nature for something better than a fashionable coquette.

Lady Zeph. [*Gaily.*] I dare say I was; for I feel already as if I had just put off my great grandfather's coat of armour: why, do you know, that though I play on the tambourine, I hate the sound of it; and though I boast of being a good shot, the touch of fire-arms gives me an ague; and as for cards, in my grandmother's time, I have gone to sleep with three honours in my hand at the most critical point of a rubber. But fashion, my dear Mrs. Derville, fashion! —one doesn't like to be different from other people.

Mrs. Derv. Ah, Lady Zephyrine, don't deceive yourself. It is not the desire of resembling other people, but that of being distinguished from them, is the source of your errors. Believe me, the trifling

and vicious characters whom you have been so zealous to imitate are few compared to those, among your own rank, who behold a conduct like yours with regret and censure——

Lady Zeph. Nay, I am sure I would never have endured the labour of making myself ridiculous, if I hadn't thought it fashionable.

Mrs. Derv. No, no, thank Heaven, neither vice nor folly are yet fashionable. And though both are too much tolerated, the example of domestic virtues, conspicuous in the highest station of the kingdom, will, I trust, long preserve our national manners from that last state of depravation which erects vice into a model.

Lady Zeph. [*Archly.*] You preach charmingly.—Pray, was all this eloquence taught you by the closet orator?

Mrs. Derv. I understand your raillery; and when I acknowledge that this young man is the secret object of my affections, I hope you will credit me, when I assure you I am yet to learn the motives of his concealment. But no matter. To-morrow, Lady Zephyrine, I quit this country for ever.

Lady Zeph. For ever?

Mrs. Derv. Yes; but before I go, I have a communication to make, which, if you do not love Mr. Jargon——

Lady Zeph. Love him! I won't say I hate him, because he's too contemptible for hatred; but I hate myself for the folly which obliges me to listen to him.

Mrs. Derv. How has your ladyship forfeited the best privilege of rank? that of repelling impertinence?

Lady Zeph. Why, as I have confided my follies to you, you may as well know the consequences of them. This vile Jargon has won of me impossible sums; I am no arithmetician, I can't recollect and mul-

tiply the items; but I have been obliged to give him a note for—four of the six thousands which are my whole fortune, independent of my brother.

Mrs. Derv. Fatal imprudence! read this letter.

Lady Zephyrine reads—at first to herself.

Lady Zeph. [*Reading.*] "Accept my terms—my marriage with the little idol of the Abbey shall not prevent my adoring you with the most perfect and unimaginable devotion— JARGON." Well, the wretch is no hypocrite; for he scarcely takes the trouble of professing a passion for me.—However, if you'll give me this letter, though I don't expect a cold, systematic coxcomb should be susceptible of shame for the commission of a base action, he may of the ridicule to which he is exposed by detection. He'll be at the Abbey this evening.

Mrs. Derv. I fancy we shall find him without going so far. Come this way, and I'll explain to you as we go along.

Lady Zeph. [*Taking her hand.*] My fair monitress, I came here in expectation of a triumph, which, I trust, my heart would hereafter have reproached me for; but to you I am indebted for the best of triumphs, the triumph over my own follies. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Before the Door of the Hermitage.*

Lady ZEPHYRINE *and Mrs.* DERVILLE, *following each other cautiously.*

Mrs. Derv. I've exceeded my time, and perhaps my spark's patience. He's not here.

Lady Zeph. [*Softly.*] I'll just peep in at the hermitage window. [*Looks in.*] Well, my dear, if you are not the object of his waking thoughts, I dare say you are of his dreams, for there he is, fast asleep.

Mrs. Derv. I suppose he has sacrificed so freely to your ladyship's birth-day, that he has forgotten both me and himself.

Lady Zeph. O, don't suppose a gamester ever forgets himself. [*Looks in at the window.*] I dare say now, he has been calculating chances. Look, there's his pocket-book and pencil down by him.

Mrs. Derv. I wish we could take it without waking him, and write both our names in it—if he is yet susceptible of shame.

Lady Zeph. A gamester susceptible of shame! O, you know nothing of the world.

Mrs. Derv. Have you the master key of the grounds?

Lady Zeph. Luckily I have—here it is—but——

Mrs. Derv. Hush! stay! [*Goes in cautiously, and brings out the book.*] Here's the book—will your ladyship write your name first—quick!—I tremble so.

[*Lady* ZEPHYRINE *taking the book from Mrs.* DERVILLE, *a paper drops out of it.*

Lady Zeph. Heavens! what's this? My note, which, through fear of being exposed to my uncle, I renewed on my coming of age this morning.

Mrs. Derv. Surely, what has been so basely obtained, might, without blame, be cancelled. Decide—perhaps a moment——

Lady Zeph. [*After some agitation.*] No, though this wretch has no honour, mine shall be sacred. The loss of my fortune is the just punishment of my folly, and I will abide by it. Replace the book.

Mrs. Derv. As you please. [*Aside, takes the note unperceived by Lady* ZEPHYRINE, *and returns with the book cautiously.*] But, by your ladyship's leave, the point of honour shall be determined by your uncle; in the mean while I'll secure the point of law. You seem agitated.

Lady Zeph. I am—I have had a little struggle between love and integrity.—Ah! Eugenia! with that little sum I could have retired with Bewley, but now——

Enter BEWLEY, *gaily.*

Bew. What, again, Lady Zephyrine. Why, I am become the very favourite of fortune. Let her throw her acres to fools, and her dross to knaves—here's metal more attractive!

Lady Zeph. You are gay, sir!

Bew. Yes, gay as your ladyship's smiles. Why not? Why shou'dn't a man without a care left be gay? Others are the slaves of fortune or of love; but for me, I'm a free man—I've lost my estate by the folly of my ancestors, and I've lost my mistress by——

Lady Zeph. [*Archly.*] By her own, eh?

Bew. Hem—no matter—One smile from Lady Zephyrine to-night, one adieu to-morrow, and heigh for London.

Lady Zeph. [*Timidly.*] For London, sir?

Bew. Yes. Isn't London the place for a man of spirit without sixpence? Are there not hazard tables and Faro banks, where those who have nothing become rich, and those who are rich become nothing? So, Cupid, take wing—honesty, avaunt, and heigh for London!

Lady Zeph. [*With volubility and spirit.*] I commend your resolution. Ah, the bewitching joys of the gaming-table, and the society of dear friends impatient to ruin you! the animating suspense between hope and fear, while Avarice, with sanguine eye and dilated palm, seizes in imagination its devoted sacrifice.—Oh—glorious! heigh for London! [*Turning suddenly to* BEWLEY.] Will you draw straws with me for a couple of thousands?

Bew. No, madam—your stake's too high for a ruin'd man.

Lady Zeph. Just the contrary—why, if you're ruin'd already, you know you can't lose. But, come, if you won't draw straws for the two thousands, will you take them without?

Bew. No, madam. I—I—[*Surprised.*

Lady Zeph. Why, what an untractable mortal it is! Then, will you take me and the two thousand together?—[*She stops short, and then lays her hand on his arm with a tender frankness.*]—Oh, Bewley! this levity of yours is assumed—'tis in vain to deny it. I know you love me. My heart is yet—nay, it ever has been yours. Will you accept my hand along with it?

Bew. [*After some agitation.*] Believe me, Lady Zephyrine, were that heart what I once thought it, the gift you offer, though it were accompanied by slavery, poverty, and a thousand ills, should be received with transport. But now, forgive me, had I been rich, love might have tempted me to forget the conduct I have so long deplored: as it is, it shall not be said that I was bribed by the fortune of the wife to overlook the errors of the mistress.

[*Exit in disorder.*

Lady Zeph. Here's an obstinate wretch! But he shall take me, errors and all, yet.

[*During the foregoing scene,* BELFORD *enters, and talks in the back ground with Mrs.* DERVILLE *in an air of supplication.*

Mrs. DERVILLE *coming forward with* BELFORD.

Mrs. Derv. The passion you profess, sir, is no excuse for your degrading its object. From this moment we part; and let our separation be accompanied by this remembrance, that your misfortunes have not prevented your creating the tenderest interest in that heart which you have overwhelmed with shame and affliction.

[*Exeunt Mrs.* DERVILLE *and Lady* ZEPHYRINE.

Belf. Dear, generous Eugenia! Yet still the mystery of her appearance—But away with suspicion. I'll now to the Abbey, discover myself to Sir

Caustic Oldstyle, and by a candid explanation of my conduct to Mrs. Derville, plead my pardon:

> For doubts caus'd by passion she never can blame;
> They are not ill-founded, or she feels the same.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*A Room at the Abbey.*

Sir CAUSTIC OLDSTYLE *and* PERIOD.

Period. Then we've hung the cloisters and statues with artificial flowers. The space between is made into a temporary room, in imitation of a grotto. How I shall shine in describing it.

Sir Caustic. I hate your paltry imitations of nature, while nature herself is neglected. You'll run from the shade of your villas to see a canvas grove at the Opera-house—or only advertise that the Pantheon is converted into an Esquimeaux hut, and all the drawing-rooms shall be deserted.

Period. A proof, sir, of our love of simplicity.

Sir Caustic. Yes, as you eat dry biscuits after a luxurious dinner. No, it's mere wantonness, and rage for novelty. 'Twas but just now I met a fellow with a rule and pencil, estimating how much 'twould cost to pull down this venerable pile, and erect some Italian gimcrack on the scite.

Period. What, Mr. Stucco, the great architect, you mean? Yes, he's to run up a smart villa, convert the chapel into a private theatre, the kitchen into an ice-house, and then he's to make the completest ruin in the Park.

Sir Caustic. Yes, yes; I dare say you'll not want for ruins, if you've sent for a great architect. But, mark me, I'll have nothing to do with your extravagances. I never obtained my wealth by disgracing my country, nor shall it be spent in corrupting it. No—I'll adopt the first blockhead that comes in my way, provided he's not one of our own family.

Period. [*Aside.*] Now, if the old gentleman would but keep his word, then how I would write—such paper, such a type!—Ah! didn't you say, sir, you were looking out for a blockhead of an heir? There's a very honest fellow, a friend of mine, Tim Period, a sort of a crackbrain—he's your man, sir—Adso, you'll have the merriest heir in christendom.—

[*Takes down a tamborine, and plays.*

Sir Caustic. Ah! what you're going to have a dance? Well, as 'tis my niece's birth-day, egad, if old Twang, the harper, were alive, I don't know but I might foot it a bit myself.

Period. I dare say, sir, Lady Zephyrine will, to oblige you, just—— [*Imitates the action of playing.*

Sir Caustic. Zounds, sirrah!—why, she's not turned drummer.

Period. Not absolutely beat the drum, sir; but this little elegant instrument—[*still imitating*]—Such grace! such attitudes!

Sir Caustic. Mercy on us! what has a modest woman to do with attitudes? Does she dance on the rope too? But I'll have done with her—I'll cut a passage through Snowdon, make a tunnel under the Irish channel, build churches of porcelain, and erect bridges of pearl—I'll die a beggar.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Here's young Squire Bewley, my lord; he says your lordship desired to see him.

Period. Shew him into my office—[*Recollecting himself.*]—Psha! my dressing-room, I mean.—Will you go with me, sir? You know you sent for him about the diamonds.

Sir Caustic. Aye, I'll follow you.

[*Exeunt* PERIOD *and Servant.*

This Bewley, too, I suppose, is some puppy, who has been running a match between his fortune and his constitution, and the latter happens to have held out

longest. Aye, aye, his uncle's prodigality to him will be the only means of his starting again on the same course. But this is the way—a man scorches five and twenty years abroad, or abridges all the comforts of his life at home, as I have done, only to acquire a fortune for a son who turns jockey, and breaks his neck; or a nephew, who turns author, and loses his wits; or a niece, who beats the drum, and wears a red wig. But I'll game, build, die a beggar.——

Enter a Servant, shewing in Mrs. DERVILLE.

Well, young gentlewoman!—There's another disappointment too—Who would have thought—But the whole sex are syrens—crocodiles!—I presume your business isn't with me—You want the young spark within, I suppose?

Mrs. Derv. Your pardon, sir; but if you are the uncle of Lord Orton——

Sir Caustic. Not I—I am uncle to nobody in the world. I have neither nephews nor nieces. No, no—thank Heaven, I have done with them.—There's a couple of modern youngsters within, indeed, who write tours and beat the drum—But mind, they don't belong to me.

Mrs. Derv. I thought, sir, you had been the gentleman from whom Lord Orton received a miniature, that——

Sir Caustic. Aye, 'twas a fancy picture—not like any body in the world—never had an original. If you want to inquire about the painter, Lady Zephyrine will tell you; and if you don't want to put me in a passion, don't say another word about it.

Mrs. Derv. This is the strangest old gentleman!—I will not, then, trouble you, sir, with this inquiry; yet, as I leave this country to-morrow, never to return, give me leave to justify myself from the suspicions which the extraordinary scene you were witness to——

Sir Caustic. What, the closet scene! But I'll not hear a word—I'll not believe a syllable. There has been neither truth nor simplicity in any woman these fifty years.

Mrs. Derv. It is not, then, for an unhappy stranger, like myself, to contend against your prejudices; and I must, though with regret, depart unjustified in your opinion.

Sir Caustic. Eh! what! who told you to depart? How should I know you were unhappy? Who are you? Where are you going?

Mrs. Derv. Alas, sir! I can scarcely tell—If possible, where I shall be no longer liable to the persecution of man.

Sir Caustic. Then you'll travel far enough. But what the deuce, don't you know where you are going? You belong to somebody—you came from somewhere—you didn't drop from the clouds—ride through the air in a whirlwind, or pop out of the sea on a wave. Then there's that addle-brain, Lord Orton, in love with you—why, if you could explain the spark in the closet, and were not of mean birth, why, as women go——

Mrs. Derv. [*With dignity.*] My birth, sir, could not be the obstacle, were there not other reasons.—It is at least equal to his own—a distinguished name, a fortune.—But why do I dwell on past misery? Why suffer——

Sir Caustic. [*Looking earnestly at her.*] If, after searching so long in vain, I should have stumbled at once—Yes, the very features—you interest me, young woman. You are too pretty to be wandering about the world without protection. Confide in me—I'm no gallant—no seducer. Thank Heaven, I'm not old enough yet to run away with a girl of twenty.

Mrs. Derv. Your frankness is to me, sir, more

valuable than compliment; and if the relation of my misfortunes will gratify you——

Sir Caustic. Proceed—proceed. You women allow nobody to have any curiosity but yourselves.—Go on.

Mrs. Derv. I have already confessed, sir, that my birth was elevated, my fortune large. At an early age I was deprived of my parents, and left to the guardianship of an uncle, whose bigotry and avarice suggested to him the design of burying the claimant of a fortune, to which he was next kin, in a convent. Aware of his design—averse to a cloister, and irritated by persecution, I accepted of the assistance of a young Englishman, whom chance threw in my way, and eloped from the convent where I was placed.

Sir Caustic. An Englishman!—the convent!—Oh! go on.

Mrs. Derv. My deliverer, I found, was poor; and ere I had time to consult my heart, with all the enthusiasm of gratitude at sixteen, I gave him my hand.

Sir Caustic. It is—it must be! Conclude, I beseech you!

Mrs. Derv. My fortune being left me on the day of marriage, for some months we lived in a constant round of gaiety and expense. But, ere two years were past, my husband's unbounded dissipation first corrupted, and at length hardened his heart. Deprived of his affection, abandoned, neglected, I lived, scarcely certain even of his existence; till, at the end of the third year after our marriage, he was brought to me, mangled by a fall from his horse, senseless and expiring.

Sir Caustic. Unfortunate girl!

Mrs. Derv. My fortune dissipated, alone, unprotected, awakened to a sense of my early imprudence,

and weaned from an attachment which I had in a thoughtless moment rendered a duty, I now felt all the horrors of my situation—My heart wounded by injuries, my spirit embittered by ingratitude, I beheld the world with disgust, mankind with horror, and at nineteen I fancied myself a misanthropist. With the scattered remains of my fortune I retired, under a borrowed name, to a convent; but the disappointed avarice of my guardian pursued me to my retreat, and obliged me to escape from Florence to Leghorn. Public events again removed me to England; and by the assistance of an English servant, I at length settled in my present situation.

Sir Caustic. And your name is Harcourt, the wife, the generous wife of my unhappy boy. Oh, Eugenia! how shall I reward you for the miseries you have suffered!

Mrs. Derv. The father of Harcourt! Then this picture is——

Sir Caustic. Is mine. It was sent me by my son on his marriage; and while he was soliciting pardon for errors, which had occasioned his banishment from his family.

Mrs. Derv. Ah, dear sir! had I known—but the name of Oldstyle, of Orton, had never been mentioned to me.

Sir Caustic. The title is recently descended to my nephew, and the name of Oldstyle I adopted on an acquisition of fortune from my late wife's father. But come, retire to a less public apartment, keep this discovery secret a few minutes, and in the mean while, dear, injured girl, remember you have found a parent. [*Exit, leading Mrs.* DERVILLE.

SCENE IV.—*Cloisters on each Side of the Stage, illuminated and ornamented with Flowers at the Extremity.—Statues and Trees ornamented in the same Manner.—Music.*

Enter Mr. and Mrs. GURNET, *and Lady* ZEPHYRINE *after.*—JARGON.—*Then* BEWLEY *from a different Side of the Stage; and at last, Sir* CAUSTIC, BELFORD, *and* PERIOD, *as in Conversation.—Music ceases. Lady* ZEPHYRINE *approaches Sir* CAUSTIC, *and he addresses her.*—BELFORD *and* PERIOD *appear to talk together till the Denouement.*

Sir Caustic. Aye, aye, I forgive the drum and the wig. I'm in so good a humour I could forgive any thing. Come, niece, as this is your birth-day, and as young women of one and twenty begin to look about 'em, I ought to inform you, that the bulk of my fortune is only at my disposal, in case my late son's wife should never appear; but, subject to this proviso, why I think a few score thousands for a wedding gown won't hurt me.

Lady Zeph. Believe me, sir, if the discovery of the claimant you mention contributes to your happiness, I shall not regret the retraction of your bounty.

Sir Caustic. Why, that's noble; that's an old sentiment, which even a new-fashioned outside cannot diminish the value of. I'm glad to see you are capable of receiving generously the daughter whom my good fortune has restored to me. [*Goes on one side of the scene, and leads in Mrs.* DERVILLE.

All. Mrs. Derville!

Sir Caustic. Come, no sentimental overflowings now. Eugenia, my poor boy, was but a sorry helpmate. You chose ill for yourself. What say you to a husband of my fancy, to my nephew, Lord Orton? [*Pointing to* PERIOD.

Mrs. Derv. Ah, pardon me, sir, if I decline. There is——

Sir Caustic. What! the closet spark, I suppose.—I know the whole business; but I must have you a countess—Perhaps, in a more humble rank, you might yourself be equally happy; but the distinctions of society, which render virtue conspicuous, are a benefit to the world. So if you won't have my old fellow-traveller, honest Tim Period, why you must even take a peer of my creation. Come, nephew, is your delicacy satisfied now, or has your lordship any more disguises and experiments?

Mrs. Derv. What! Belford?

Lady Zeph. Yes, this is, indeed, my brother.

Belf. [*Embracing her.*] Dear Zephyrine! Eugenia! [*taking her hand*] my beloved Eugenia! Can you, will you pardon the deception?

Sir Caustic. No, I warrant she won't. Women never pardon any deceptions except their own. But I am too old to wait the usual fopperies of your penitence and her coquetry; and as this is one of the few deceptions which explanation will not make worse, why, you shall marry first, and you'll have time enough to explain hereafter.—And now, my pretty rake, if some sober subject of the old school would take you off my hands—Your fortune, indeed, is reduced, but then you can shoot flying, and beat the drum, you know.

Gurnet. Aye, and a wife may make worse noises than that. Isn't the sound of a drum better than the rumbling of an ode?—What say you, Mr. Jargon, to my ward and her six thousand? There, 'tis all right and fair—India, Bank, Consols—I've turn'd it for her.

Sir Caustic. Hey! why, here's a lover for you, humming and lounging—that's modern too, I suppose.

Jargon. Lady Zephyrine's accomplishments, sir, are too brilliant to be set in any thing but gold;

and six thousand isn't a month's pin-money (powder and shot money I should say) for a woman of spirit. So, sir, with your permission, I limit my claim to four only of the six thousand.

Lady Zeph. What relinquish "the little idol of the Abbey?"

Mrs. Derv. And disappoint me of the black boy and curricle?

Jargon. 'Sdeath! I've lost the note! I see, ladies, you're inclined to be merry; and as mirth is vulgar, and I hate family parties, why, I leave you to the reigning system. [*Going.*]

Period. Hark ye, my honest cousin, don't depend much on your four thousand—or a note obtained by a little dexterity at the gaming table; take the thing snugly.—Magistrates in town are active—judges uncivil—and the toleration of artists of your description is no longer the—reigning system. So, snug's the word. [*Exit* JARGON.

Lady Zeph. So, you see, good folks, I'm abandoned by one swain, and it isn't two hours ago since I was rejected by another; but as you are determined, sir, not to be troubled with me, perhaps Mr. Bewley here, to oblige you, not on my account though, I declare.

Bew. When I refused your offered hand, dear Lady Zephyrine, I was a beggar.—The bounty of my uncle, and Mr. Period's integrity, have now enabled me to accept with honour a gift it cost me so much pain to refuse.—Will you again renew——

Lady Zeph. Well, if I do condescend to forgive you, mind, 'tis purely to oblige my uncle.

Sir Caustic. Come, I think we shall be able to add enough to the six thousand for a sober pair of bays and a chariot—but none of your wildfire equipages to run over quiet people, and make anecdotes for my friend Period's travels.

AP-GRIFFIN (*within.*)

Ap-Grif. I say I must see him.—Eh, Timmy! Hast sold the diamonds? got the cash!

Period. Yes, I've disposed of 'em.—Won't cheat my own relations. [*Gives him a paper.*] I'll give you all I received.

Ap-Grif. [*Reads.*] "Received of Humphrey Ap-Griffin, by the hands of Mr. Timothy Period, the under-mentioned diamonds, entrusted to the care of the said Ap-Griffin.—Edward Mansel." Why, you rascal, you unnatural rogue, I'll hang, I'll quarter you!

Period. Hush! hush! uncle—Honesty, you know, is the best policy—always do the just thing.

Ap-Grif. A plague of your memory—But I'll be reveng'd; I'll take out a statute of lunacy against you, and you shall scribble tours on the walls of Bedlam as long as you live. [*Exit.*

Period. And now, my lord, I resign my peerage for a character, I hope ever to maintain, that of your friend, honest Tim Period.

Belf. We shall not forget your services; you shall be retained in all the family suits of the whole principality. We'll purchase a dozen editions of your tour.

Period. Ah! my lord, I'd rather you'd praise it. And if this good company should but approve the first edition, my gratitude will last till I travel to that "bourne, from whence no tourist returns."—But as I'm in no hurry to go there at present, let me hope, in the mean while, for permission to travel this way again.

LIE OF A DAY:

A COMEDY,

IN THREE ACTS,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

BY JOHN O'KEEFFE, Esq.

CHARACTERS.

Sir CARROL O'DONOVAN,	*Mr Waddy.*
Young O'DONOVAN,	*Mr Clarke.*
AIRCOURT,	*Mr Lewis.*
LARRY KAVANAGH,	*Mr Knight.*
ALIBI,	*Mr Quick.*
METHEGLIN,	*Mr Fawcett.*
POVOT,	*Mr Simmonds.*
WAITER,	———
FOOTMAN,	*Mr Blurton.*
BOY,	———
Lady ARABLE,	*Miss Chapman.*
SOPHIA,	*Mrs Knight.*
KATTY KAVANAGH,	*Mrs Davenport.*
FIB,	*Mrs Watts.*

SCENE—Hampton Court.

LIE OF A DAY.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Room at the Toy.*

Enter AIRCOURT *and Waiter.*

Airc. ANY of our lads up here at the Toy since, Ned?

Wait. Yes, your honour; the crew of your cutter dined with us last Sunday.

Airc. Is old Alibi, the attorney, down here much?

Wait. Yes, sir; he's over at his house.

Airc. Have you seen his ward, Miss Sophia Seymour, lately?

Wait. Ah! poor young lady! he seldom lets her go out but to church—A charity for some gentleman, like your honour, to whip off to church with her.

Airc. Why, Ned, I have some notion—but to give you a simile in your own way—the old black rascal keeps her as close as a cork in a bottle; which, to get out, I mustn't bolt inward, but turn screw round and round, and then cluck's the word. Get me a

room, and put my things in it. [*Exit Waiter.*] How shall I get to see her? My new rival too! Who can he be?—Let's see—Where did Sophia say she first saw him? [*Peruses a letter.*] "Noticed his watching me at the gate of Sir Ashton Lever's Museum——heavy shower at Chelsea——brought guardian and I to town in his hackney-coach—A monstrous fool!"—Yes; but if this monstrous fool should prove an over-match for all my wit—If I could only contrive to see her.

Enter LARRY KAVANAGH *and Waiter.*

Wait. Please, sir, to walk into this room. [*Exit.*

Airc. O'Donovan!

Larry. Aircourt! Who'd have thought of meeting you here at Hampton-Court?

Airc. Why, but what the deuce brought you here?

Larry. I'm here upon a love-scheme—incog.—hush! you remember I told you over the last bottle we crack'd together at the Bedford——

Airc. True; our candles went out, and your story set me asleep. [*Yawns.*]

Larry. Well, rouse now—You know Alibi, the attorney——he's guardian to the most lovely——the sweetest——

Airc. Zounds, my Sophia! [*Aside.*]

Larry. I'll have her.

Airc. Will you, faith? [*Aside.*] What, then, you're acquainted with her?

Larry. The first time I saw my charmer, she was engaged in a wrangle with her guardian at the gate of the—Museum—in—a—Leicester-fields.

Airc. Leicester-fields! Oh, ho! [*Aside.*]

Larry. She would see the butterflies, ha, ha, ha! He, in a rage, slapping his cane on a show-glass of watch-strings, seals, and sleeve-buttons——cries, "Zounds! it's half-a-crown"——"The exact price

of that pane," says the man of the shop—"Jack, fetch the glazier"—The expence of this accident determined the affair; and the generous attorney, instead of Sir Ashton's, proposing a trudge to Don Saltero's, I whip'd in a hack before them to Chelsea—Returning home, down comes an auspicious shower, and, to save eighteen-pence, Alibi accepts of part of my coach.

Airc. What, your own hack, ha, ha, ha!—Yes, this is Sophia's monstrous fool. [*Aside.*]

Larry. I throw a tender glance—Sophia blushes, and we exchange hearts through our eyes—Such ogles!

Airc. Damn your ogles! [*Surly.*]

Larry. What!

Airc. That is, I want to know your scheme.

Larry. Will you help?

Airc. With pleasure—to cut your throat. [*Aside.*]

Larry. Vastly good! That letter——[*Gives it.*]

Airc. "To Capias Alibi, Esquire—Dear sir, the bearer is a young man from Yorkshire, being desirous to improve himself in the profession of an attorney, I recommend him to you; and think a dealing in this case will be to the advantage of both. Yours, Nol Pross."——Well, what of this?

Larry. Ha, ha, ha! Can't you see? That I procured for a little cash, of a brother rogue of Alibi's—I deliver it—it gains me free access to Sophia; of which, if I don't avail myself——

Airc. Must turn him off from this. [*Aside.*] Won't Alibi remember you in the Chelsea shower? Ha, ha, ha! won't he?

Larry. No, he won't; ha, ha, ha! [*mimicking.*] For, to get the worth of his money in gaping about, he scarce look'd at me at Don Saltero's—And then, to face my charming Sophia, I sat beside him in the coach; besides, I shall change my voice; and, to provide for that, I've made Nol say I am from

Yorkshire—Oh, you'd laugh to see—I shall be clerkified all over. [*Displays his dress.*

Airc. But really now, do you think old Alibi is such a blockhead as not to perceive from your air, person, address—the fashion that is in your manner altogether! What! take you for a sordid, shabby Cursitor-street ramskin scribbler? Ha, ha, ha! never! The gentleman in your coat would belie Nol Pross's letter, and get you and it kicked out of the house, to the eternal disgrace of St. James's, and the triumph of Chancery-lane.

Larry. Egad, Aircourt, I believe you're right.

Airc. Depend upon't, the old attorney would perceive the diamond, though set in copper.

Larry. Hang it! this air of travel which we acquire abroad—I wish I wasn't so—elegant in my *manière*—I wish I had a little of the common—vulgar——Now you, Aircourt, how natural you'd look the ramskin scribbler!

Airc. D'ye think so? you flatter me.

Larry. O, you'd top the character!

Airc. Then, dem'me, I'll appear in it. I will secure this letter—that will do—and for change of dress, Ned the waiter will equip me! [*Aside.*] Zounds, it is two o'clock! but I can get to Drury-lane by the second act.

Larry. 'Sdeath! don't think of town or play-houses to-night!

Airc. Her Calista is one of the most capital—— When she tears the letter—" To atoms thus let me tear the wicked, lying evidence of shame"—[*having, unseen, put* LARRY'S *letter in his pocket, tears another.*

Larry. Why, zounds, you've torn my letter!

Airc. And then her smile of contempt upon Horatio, after——

Larry. Damn you and Horatio, sir! D'ye see what you've done? Knock'd up my whole affair!

Airc. 'Pon my soul I ask pardon—I did not think what I was about.

Larry. The devil! What am I to do now? This is cruel of you, Aircourt.

Airc. Come, O'Donovan, though I've destroyed your passport, no harm done. For any project to gain Sophia, I'm yours—from a spank to Scotland, burning old Alibi's house, or any mischief of that sort.

Larry. My dear Aircourt, I thank you heartily—I'll go dress, and then for Lady Arable's, a charming young widow here at Hampton Court—Has been over in Ireland to view some of her estates there, and my father has squir'd her back again—Designs her as a match for me—Ha, ha, ha! Rather a nice thing to match me, Eh, Aircourt?

Airc. Yes; but I think I'll match you, ha, ha, ha!

Larry. My father don't know I have been five months diverting myself in England under an assumed name—Dad thinks I'm still on my Italian travels—my bills will come pelting in upon him rarely—An't I right, my boy? Lovely Sophia!—Love, fire, and frolic, that's my motto!

Airc. Plague of your frolics! [*Aside.*]—Sophia, perhaps, is at home, now?—That is—he keeps her close.

Larry. Close! she saves him the expense of a clerk. But, Aircourt, don't think of London to-night.

Airc. Well, I won't.

Larry. [*Looking at fragments.*] Honest Nol Pross's letter—What the devil's to be done?

Airc. Oh, Nol Pross's letter [*looking at him*]; it will do something yet, ha, ha, ha! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*An Office in* ALIBI'S *House.*

SOPHIA *discovered writing at a high Desk.*

Sophia. [*Dashes the pen away.*] I will not write any more of his law-gibberish! Was ever poor girl so used as I am by this wicked old attorney! Cruel mamma! to make such a wretch her executor; and condemn me to the guardianship of one who will never suffer me to be united to the man I love, whilst it's his interest to keep my fortune in his hands. O, my beloved Aircourt! [*Sings.*] "Young Harry's the lad for me!"

Alibi. [*Without.*] Yes, the very thing I wanted.

Enter ALIBI.

Sophy, look at my forehead—any blood come? I only wish it would! I've been endeavouring to provoke the exciseman, and abusing him these six weeks; but at last he has given me a choice knock on the pate—The rogue's worth money, and I'll having swinging damages!

Sophia. Lord, sir! Do you go out to quarrel with the people only on purpose that they may beat you?

Alibi. To be sure! Beat! Why, I have made fifty pounds out of the wag of a finger, and have earned a hundred guineas of a morning, only by single tweaks by the nose.—Now, miss, have you drawn up the bill of indictment? Egad, child, you'll have no use for your fortune! By the Lord! you'll make a choice chamber counsel.—[*Reads*] "Parish aforesaid—county aforesaid—did make an assault upon one——and did then and there beat, wound, and cruelly ill-treat——against the peace of our sovereign lord the king——But of all the fine wrestlers that dance on the green, young Harry's the lad for me!"—Oh, the devil! here's a bill of in-

dictment to come before a grand jury!—So, the exciseman breaks my head with his gauging-stick, and then "Young Harry's the lad for me!"

Sophia. Well; and so Harry Aircourt is the lad for me, in spite of you, or all Westminster-hall, with Lord Chief Justice at your head.

Alibi. I wish I could but once see this fine Mr. Harry Aircourt in the street, though, only to see if he's such a prime serjeant as you make him.

Sophia. He a prime serjeant! No! heaven made my Aircourt handsome, witty, gay, elegant, generous, and good natur'd.

Alibi. It's his good nature that shoves him on to make ballads about me, and set all his drunken companions at the Anacreontic roaring out in chorus "O rare old Alibi!"—But if he comes, if I don't set my bull dog at him—

Sophia. O, then, from your bull dog Heaven defend me—ha, ha, ha!

Enter AIRCOURT, *disguised as a country lad.*

Alibi. [*Sees* AIRCOURT, *puts* SOPHIA *out.*] Who are you? What do you want?

Airc. I want to larn the laa.

Alibi. You want to larn the laa! I wish you'd larn manners.

Airc. Oh, I have—for I daunce mortishly weel.

Alibi. You daunce! Then, perhaps, you come here for a partner. [*Looking after* SOPHIA.]

Airc. Yez.

Alibi. What do you want?

Airc. I want—that letter——[*Gives one.*]

Alibi. You want—this letter?—then what the devil do you give it me for?

Airc. Look at the outside.

Alibi. "Capias Alibi——Bearer—from Yorkshire—attorney—recommend—dealing—this case—advantage—Yours, Nol Pross."—Well, Yorkshire's

a good country to produce an attorney. My friend Nol Pross gives you a good character.

Airc. Oh yez, sir—I'm a very honest lad.

Alibi. Honest! and want to be an attorney! Hem! I don't think I can do any thing with you.

Airc. No! Then what am I to do with the money feyther sent up wi' me for it?

Alibi. You have money! Now I look at you again, you're a very promising lad.

Airc. Cousin Nol said I might larn, board, and sleep here.

Alibi. Ecod! if you sleep here, you must board; for I've no bed for you. [*Aside.*]

Airc. You see my money is ready; so I hope you'll afford me a good bed.

Alibi. Why, you dog!—your ready money shews you don't want to lie upon tick, ha, ha, ha! Hark ye! Perhaps I sha'n't beat you above once before you commit a fault.

Airc. Before!

Alibi. Yes; I may thresh you out of pure good nature, only to shew you what you are to expect if you deserve it.

Airc. Oh, then I'm to be beat to save me from a threshing! Good natur'd indeed, he, he, he!

Alibi. You're not given to girls, are you?

Airc. I sometimes play in the meads a wi' bit.

Alibi. Well said, Yorkshire! But you won't dare to speak to a young lady?

Airc. Not for the vorld! I'd blush so hugely.

Alibi. That's right—I like a modest youth—because I have a young miss within here.

Airc. Lack-a-daisy! do you keep a miss?

Alibi. Ha, ha, ha! What a simpleton! Before I determine to retain him, I'll first see their behaviour together—Miss Sophy!

Enter SOPHIA.

Airc. My beloved girl! I hope she'll know me. [*Aside.*

Alibi. Well, Sophy, I've got a new clerk.

Sophia. This must be the fop that followed me to Chelsea—He said he'd visit me in some disguise; but I'll discourage his impertinence in time. [*Aside.*] Ha, ha, ha! my very wise, vigilant, shrewd, sagacious guardian! A clerk! ha, ha, ha! This is a very facetious gentleman, that's come hither on a scheme to run away with me! ha, ha, ha!

Airc. 'Sdeath! what can she mean? [*Aside.*]

Alibi. How! an impostor!

Sophia. Look! You can't know the polite Strephon that brought us from Chelsea in his hackney-coach?

Alibi. This!

Airc. What! I!—he, he, he!

Sophia. Bless me! it's my Aircourt himself. [*Aside.*

Alibi. Why, Sophy, you're the most conceited—When, neither you nor I ever saw this young man before. That coxcomb Aircourt has blown you up so with his love nonsense, that you imagine all the young men in the town are laying plans and stratagems, ha, ha, ha! You are welcome, my lad, and so is your money! [*Takes it.*]

Sophia. Now I look at him again, he's vastly like Aircourt.

Alibi. She only says this to vex me. He shall be my clerk above all the clerks in Christendom.

Airc. He, he, he! Thank you, sir. [*Bows.*]

Sophia. "He, he, he! thank you, sir"—Oh, you shock!

Alibi. He's no shock! he's a pretty boy, and will be Lord Chancellor, won't you, Robin?

Airc. Ecod, that's my name, sure enough.

Sophia. Well, mind, Jack Robin—since guardian

will keep you, you shall be my beau, and make love to me.

Airc. Love! Oh, miss!

Alibi. Get you in.

Sophia. Now, pray——

Alibi. Go—[*puts her in.*] Don't mind her, Robin—Her heart's so full of this Aircourt, that I believe she'd despise even a judge upon the bench.

Airc. What, then she loves one Aircourt?

Alibi. But, my young clerk, by way of beginning, I'll set you a task—Step into that room there, and ingross this deed [*gives him papers.*—AIRCOURT *going towards the door where* SOPHIA *went off.*]—Stop—that door. [*Pointing to the centre door.*]

Airc. I thought I was to ingross there, he, he, he!

Alibi. Robin, you're a good lad; but for a lawyer, heaven save us!

Airc. Then you think my coming here answers the purpose.

Alibi. Oh, yes, your coming here answers the purpose! [*Clinking the money.*]

Airc. And that by this means I shall get all I want. [*Steals the key out of* SOPHIA'S *door.*]

Alibi. [*Counting the money.*] Yes; by this means we get all we want—Go yonder.

Airc. Dear, how much I am obliged to Mr. Nol Pross! [*Exit at centre door.*

Alibi. Write away, my boy! and I warrant you'll be Lord Chief Baron some Sunday or other—Dam'me, I'll dress my wig on your pate next Saturday evening. As I am going out, no harm to lock up my ward—The key gone! How's this? Soft! [*Locks the centre door, and takes the key.*] One key is as good as another. Good bye, Robin.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*The Coffee Room at the Toy.*

Enter Sir CARROL *and Waiter.*

Sir Car. Never mind, young man! I don't want any refreshment—I've set Lady Arable down at her house, and am only walking about to see your town and palace. And, Joy, so this is your coffee-room? Oh, newspapers! Let's peep at the "Lie of the Day." [*Reads.*] [*Exit Waiter.*

Enter Young O'DONOVAN *with a small bundle on a stick over his shoulder—weary, sits.*

This poor young man seems to have had a long walk of it.

O'DONOVAN *rings—Enter Waiter.*

Wait. Did your honour call? [*To Sir* CARROL.]

O'Don. 'Twas I that rung—A little wine and water.

Wait. [*Surveys him contemptuously.*] Coming, sir.

O'Don. I spoke to you.

Wait. This room is only for gentlemen—— Coming.

O'Don. [*Looks sternly at Waiter.*] Sir, I ask pardon.

[*Bows to Sir* CARROL, *and is retiring.*

Sir Car. Stop, sir.—[*Turns to Waiter.*] Hark ye, friend! remember, as you live by the public liberality, your guest, be his appearance what it may, has a claim, at least, to your civility. You say this room is appropriated to gentlemen—I am one, and master of a parlour in Ireland to the full as good as this: and, by my soul, I could never think it more highly honour'd than by giving a welcome to the weary traveller. Go. [*Exit Waiter.*] I ask pardon, sir—whence are you?

O'Don. Sir, I came from London now, and got there only last night from Ireland.

Sir Car. Then you're Irish?

O'Don. Sir, I have that honour.

Sir Car. And pray, my young traveller—excuse my question; but I feel myself interested in your concerns, though a stranger to them. Tell me, what are your views?

O'Don. In my infancy, my father, sir, (I never knew the cause,) came over to England, and thus destitute, Providence raised a friend, who placed me at Dublin College. The death of this benefactor stopping my resources, obliged me to quit my studies; and I have been drawn to Hampton-Court on the credit of a disjointed kind of story, that my father had retired here in the enjoyment of an ample fortune, which he had acquired by the practice of an attorney: but after a long journey, and every possible inquiry, I can hear of no such person.

Enter LARRY KAVANAGH, *dressed.*

Larry. Povot! bring a glass—Such an abominable room to dress in! For a glass you thought, I suppose, Narcissus-like, I was to set my face in a bason of water.

Enter Servant with a glass, powder puff, &c.

Hah! this is something! [*adjusts himself before a glass.*] There you are, from toupee to shoe-string—As this lady's house is so near—Povot, another volley from your powder-puff.

Sir Car. Why, you scoundrel! what, do you mean to make a barber's shop of a coffee-room?

Larry. A little more on this curl, Povot.

Sir Car. Take that, sirrah! [*Strikes* POVOT.]

Povot. Ventre bleu!

Sir Car. And your master's a puppy, whoever he is.

Larry. Can you fence, old Touchwood?

O'Don. [*Interposing.*] I can, a little, sir.

Larry. You!—ah! [*contemptuously.*] Tol, lol, lol! [*Exeunt* LARRY *and* POVOT.

Sir Car. [*Looks after* LARRY, *then at* O'DONOVAN.] Oh, what a bitter mistake has fortune made! Now that thing, void of manners and humanity, may have a worthy father, who, while he supplies with a liberal hand, little thinks he's throwing his money away upon a rascal! Ah, this is your home education! I have a son abroad that I expect in a few days, stay till you see him, my generous lad—he shall thank you for your spirited politeness to me.—Since you have lost your friend, and can't find your father, inquire for me at Lady Arable's—Something may be done—Hold!—I'll perform first, and that saves the trouble of a promise, and precludes even a chance of disappointment. [*Offers money.*]

O'Don. I thank you, sir; but it's too soon to accept of favours, even when we stand in need of them. [*Declines.*]

Sir Car. Well, well, my boy—I—I—like your—spirit—I was abrupt—I ask your pardon.

Enter Waiter.

Wait. Sir, Lady Arable has sent over.

Sir Car. Very well. Ask for Sir Carrol O'Donovan—(a fine young man!) What an unhappy father must he be, that could abandon such a son.

[*Exit Sir* CARROL *and Waiter.*

O'Don. Sir Carrol O'Donovan! Then the son that he speaks of must be the child my mother nursed—Now I shall know if she's yet living.—But alienated by her neglect, as I never knew the tender care of a parent, I don't feel that impulse of filial

affection—Sir Carrol sha'n't know who I am—The meanness of my birth might add contempt to the compassion that my poverty has already excited.

[*Exit.*

ACT II.

A Room at Lady ARABLE'S.

Enter Sir CARROL, *leading in Lady* ARABLE.

Lady Arable. Now, Sir Carrol, with thanks for your hospitality to me at your house in Ireland, I bid you welcome to my house in England.

Sir Car. Well, Lady Arable, recollect that your wise, old, and very good friends advised you to put yourself and fortune under the protection of an husband—I am entirely of their opinion; besides wasting the charming bloom of life in lonely widowhood, your property requires an hearted solicitude to manage it—If on sight (as you promised your relations) you should like my son well enough to bless him with your fair hand—Oh, you will make me happy! I have never seen Edward no more than you, my lady, as 'twas my father sent him abroad for education; but I expect you'll soon behold in my boy an accomplished gentleman.

Enter Footman.

Footm. Sir, a young man inquires for you.

Sir Car. Shew him up—With your permission, madam. [*Exit Footman.*

Enter O'DONOVAN *clean—he and Lady* ARABLE *look with surprise and embarrassment at each other.*

O'Don. Sir, in obedience to your commands—

Sir Car. Lady Arable, a boon. As you'll have a good deal of stewardship and settling your affairs with old Alibi your attorney, some employment may be found for this young man.—Till I can do something for him, you'll oblige me by taking him under your protection: though he's a stranger, I'll stake my fortune on his honesty. [O'DONOVAN *bows.*]

Lady Arable. The very young man! Can he forget me? He come to England! [*Aside.*]

O'Don. She's ashamed to recollect me: but she's right. [*Aside.*]

Enter Footman.

Footm. Sir, Mr. O'Donovan is arrived. [*Exit.*

Sir Car. [*Joyful.*] Hah! my son!

Enter LARRY KAVANAGH *dressed.*

Larry. As I never had the honour of paying my duty to a father, I presume, sir, you are——How! [*Surprised.*]

Sir Car. [*Surprised.*] Edward! this!——My lady, my son has paid his duty to me before in a powder puff!

Larry. I'm shock'd, sir—with—such awe——

Sir Car. Pray, can you fence, old Touchwood?

Larry. Sir—I—I—[*Sees* O'DONOVAN.] He can, a little.

O'Don. Then this is my foster brother. [*Aside.*]

Larry. I ask pardon, sir; but at the first transient glance, I mistook you for a—some mechanic.

Sir Car. Did you, faith?—Ah, then at my first glance, I protest I mistook you for a—gentleman—So we were both mistaken [*mortified.*] Son, this is Lady Arable, whom I so often mentioned in my letters. [*Introduces them.*]

Lady Arable. Sir, you are welcome.

Sir Car. Edward, though your marriage with this

lady is rather to be hoped than expected, try if you can win her heart; for, sir, the affection of an amiable woman is the first supreme delight that can possess the soul of man.—With all the shining, foreign education, a few home-spun documents are wanting here [*aside.*]—A few words with you, sir.

[*Exit.*

Larry. [*Looking at Lady* ARABLE.] This still life! no dem it, the sprightly Sophia for me [*aside.*] Tol, lol, lol. [*Exit.*

Lady Arable. Pray, sir, how have you left our amiable friend?

O'Don. Madam!

Lady Arable. Then you don't recollect ever having seen me in an agreeable party one evening?

O'Don. I hadn't a thought that the pleasure of that honour could be succeeded by the honour of this!

Lady Arable. Excuse me—but do you know any thing of this Mr. O'Donovan?

O'Don. Only, madam, that he's the happiest of mankind.

Lady Arable. Oh, if married to me!—Vastly obliging!—But I am apprehensive, that where a mistress is the object, your judgment of happiness is not very extensive. Devoted to the muses, you are, I presume, only their humble admirer.

O'Don. Madam, was there a muse for every star, and that star like Lady Arable, the odds would still be in her favour. [*Bows.*]

Enter FIB *hastily.*

Fib. Oh, ma'am! ma'am!

[O'DONOVAN *bows and exit.*

Lady Arable. Well? [*Peevish.*]

Fib. Lord, that's a very handsome young man! but they're all deceitful creatures!

Lady Arable. I'm in no humour now——

Fib, Ma'am, only think of Mr. O'Donovan's pretending to his father that he will marry you, and yet all the while going on with an underhand scheme to carry off a young lady in the neighbourhood.

Lady Arable. Paying his addresses to another! O, if I can but bring this to a proof, it will justify to Sir Carrol a refusal that I'm now determined upon. [*Aside*.]

Fib. Ay, and I can tell you more of his scandalous goings-on my lady.

Lady Arable. Sophia knows every body; I may hear from her who my rival is—But to employ this dear stranger as Sir Carrol requested. My steward Metheglin's neglecting my affairs, and gallanting about with this fine Irish belle that he has brought over, gives a colour for taking some of my papers out of his hands. Send Metheglin to me, and fetch my cloak. [*Exeunt severally*.

Enter METHEGLIN *and* KATTY.

Meth. Come in, I tell you, Mrs. Katty; this room and furniture is worth your seeing above all the rest.

Katty. Yes, Mr. Metheglin; but if your lady should catch you bringing folks all about her house, I should die with shame.

Meth. My lady! ah, my dear, when ladies have taste, and butlers have—[*Conceitedly*.]

Katty. Certainly, Mr. Metheglin, you are a very comely man, to give the devil his due.

Meth. My lady's going to be married to another —therefore—honour—if she wasn't quite in love with me, she'd have turned me out of the house long ago, I'm grown so idle—Cou'dn't part with me, so took me over to Ireland with her, where I met you, my dearest Katty!

Katty. But, Mr. Metheglin, as I have had one

bad husband already, the trifle I bring you you must settle upon me in case I should outlive you, honey.

Meth. I hope there's no fear of that, my sweetest.

Fib. [*Without.*] Mr. Metheglin!

Meth. Do you hear? these women won't let me alone.

Enter Fib.

Fib. Pray come, my lady wants you.

Meth. Oh this jealousy!—So here my Katty says, "Sit with me, my comfort"—and my lady sends word that she wants me.—If we're ordinary, we're ugly fellows; if beautiful, we are cruel souls and barbarous gentlemen—and from the lady in the drawing-room to the maids in the garret, they buz about us like flies round a honey-pot.

Fib. My lady sent me to——

Meth. Yes, your lady sent you to me; I send you to my lady, and so return the compliment.

Fib. Ah, if you go on this way, you'll get the wrong side of the door.

Meth. The side of the door, Madam Fib?—— here's my thanks for not telling when I caught you daubing my lady's tooth-powder on your cheeks, and cribbing her imperial tea.

Fib. Upon my word, you take an immense many airs upon you since you have brought over your bog-trotter. Ha, ha, ha! [*Exit.*

Katty. Bog-trotter! only stop a moment, Mrs. Minikin, and I'll give you a mighty handsome slap on the forehead.

Meth. She wou'dn't stop, Katty, if you'd even give her two.

Katty. Bog-trotter, indeed! I'll soon shew the proudest of them all—Oh, stay till they see my son Larry master of Sir Carrol's estate!

Meth. A son of yours master of Sir Carrol O'Donovan's estate!

Katty. Since you and I are so soon to be one, you shall know all about it—I'll soon shew them who I am, and who my son Larry is.

Meth. Who is he, pray?

Katty. You all think I only nursed this fine young gentleman that arrived an hour ago, but that's my own child.

Meth. Yours! the devil he is!

Katty. Mine. Sir Carrol making a stolen match, his father, on hearing it, sent him abroad, and the poor young lady, his wife, lying in privately at my house, died in child-birth; so faith my husband, (poor man,) who was a little bit of a lawyer, made me send our own infant to the grandpapa instead of Sir Carrol's baby, and by this my son Lawrence is bred up like a fine gentleman; and t'other poor fellow was placed at the college of Dublin as a sizer, or something of that sort.

Meth. How! shall I be master of Sir Carrol's great estate? see, Katty, if I don't manage it tightly for him. Steward, agent, and bailiff—encourage him to run out—lend him his own money—borrow myself of every body—get into parliament, and—[*suddenly claps his hand to his mouth.*] Lord a mercy! what was I going to say? [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—ALIBI'S *Office.*

Enter SOPHIA—*speaks at centre Door.*

Sophia. Mr. Aircourt! my guardian's gone out.

Airc. [*Within.*] But how shall I get out?

Sophia. What a malicious old creature to lock you in. Can't you push back the lock?

Airc. I have already broke his penknife attempting it.

Sophia. Try my scissars [*puts them under the door.*] There, take them—Lord! man! try. What the

deuce, have you fallen asleep? how provoking! Aircourt!

Enter AIRCOURT *at the side unperceived.*

Ah! you're a pretty Pyramus! Why don't you try my scissars?

Airc. What, to cut love or to kill the lion, my Thisbe!

Sophia. Ah! how the deuce did you get there?

Airc. Popped out of the back window—perched upon a cucumber frame—hopped up stairs—and here I am your own poor Robin!

Sophia. Ah, "You foolish fluttering thing" [*sings*] "Sweet Robin, sweet Robin!"

Enter ALIBI.

Alibi. Now do I suspect this Robin to be a canary. [*Aside.*]

Airc. [*Seeing* ALIBI.] The old one! but mind me [*apart.*] Yes, miss, I think I could teach you to play at cribbage after dinner, for I was counted a dab at it in our parts.

Sophia. Thank you, Robin.

Alibi. Now this must be Robin Goodfellow! and has whipped through the key-hole. I won't seem to know he's got out, only to try how he'll carry it off [*aside—unlocks the door and calls.*] Well, Robin, have you engrossed that? Come here, my lad!

[AIRCOURT *walks by him in at the door, and instantly returns.*]

Sophia. Ha, ha, ha!

Alibi. Eh! that's one way of coming out.

Airc. The Yorkshire way; whenever we'd come out of a room, we always go in first.

Alibi. Your hand; you'll make a damned good lawyer! But I left you in that room, and I locked the door.

Airc. Yes, sir; but you didn't lock the window!

Alibi. He'll do. A queer beginning though! no doing without application, my friend! I set you about an affair of consequence within there, and I find you with my ward without here.

Sophia. O, my poor guardian! so when you thought you had Robin in crib, here was he teaching me to play cribbage—He, he, he!

Alibi. How dare you quit your station?

Airc. Oh, sir, I thought it was dinner-time.

Alibi. No danger from this fellow—I never heard or read of a lover that was hungry. [*Aside.*]

Airc. Sir, I'd have you take care of one Aircourt, her head runs on nothing but him—he'll certainly carry her off.

Sophia. Oh, that nothing may hinder him!

Alibi. Yes, but something shall hinder him—my wit, my vigilance shall.

Airc. But what's your wit to a young fellow with strength in his arm, and the devil in his head?

Alibi. What do you mean—to talk so, boy?

Sophia. Guardian! in spite of all your art and cunning, if my Aircourt, inspired by love and superior wit, had by an ingenuity of stratagem got in here, what would you do?

Airc. Aye, sir, what would you do?

Sophia. Cou'dn't he push a little feeble old quizby like you down into a—chair?

Alibi. How, pray?

Sophia. Shew him how, Robin.

Airc. Why, there. [*Shoves him into a chair.*]

Alibi. Well, now what would he do then?

Airc. Why he'd carry the girl off.

Alibi. If these are your notions, your friends did well to have you "larn the laa," if only to save you from being hanged some time or other! A good occasion this to give him his first lesson [*aside.*]—Well, honest Robin, you suppose it a very easy

pleasant thing for a young fellow to run away with a lady from her guardian?

Airc. Quite easy, and vastly pleasant mayhap.

Alibi. Then I'll shew you how, for such a pleasant trick, you may hop and dance too. Sophy, hand me down that Coke yonder.

Airc. Stop, miss, I'm taller nor yow [*helping her, the book falls.*]

Alibi. Why, you dog, do you want to kill the girl?

Sophia. Yes, he's quite a killing creature.

Alibi. Now, my boy, I've something here under my thumb, that will open your eyes to the danger of breaking the laws of your country!

Sophia. But a true lover despises law and danger.

Alibi. Despise law! that's a decent word out of your mouth, miss, before my pupil [*apart.*]—Now, Robin, for argument's sake, we'll suppose that this young lady has 30,000*l.*—I don't say she has, only putting a case—and here I am her guardian; and we'll say, still for argument's sake, you are Aircourt.

Sophia. Aye, you are my Aircourt.

Airc. And you my Sophia; and there sits your gentle old quizby with Lord Coke under his thumb.

Alibi. Now, Robin—I beg your pardon, Mr. Aircourt—only just take that lady out of that door, and if you can read I'll after that shew you a few lines here that will convince you what a hopeful hobble one of us will be in.

Airc. But let's understand—Oh! I'm to make believe to run away with her, and we're to leave you in a hobble.

Alibi. What a stupid—he, he, he!—Sophy, carry it on with him.

Sophia. Me go out with him! Silly! indeed I shan't.

Alibi. Why, you perverse girl! mustn't I give the

lad some insight of the profession since I've touched his money? and no conviction like example—do it [*apart.*] Take Sophy away.

Airc. I woll, I woll. But, sir, if Aircourt even had carried off miss in the manner I'm going to do, nobody would believe it—it's so comical—he, he, he!—They'd only think it the "Lie of the Day."

Alibi. Aye, Robin! the "Lie of the Day!"—There, go.

Airc. Well then, good bye—till we see you again. [*Exit whistling with* SOPHIA.

Alibi. Ha, ha, ha! Oh, you ignoramus!—the fool little thinks that a man can't even run away with his own wife without being punished for it.—Now, where is the chapter?—don't come in yet—I'll shew him that he may get hanged for what he now whistles at—Oh, here it is—Robin!—Sophy!—Come, don't stand grinning out there at each other—Robin! Zounds! come in [*goes to the door.*] Eh! the door bolted!—Treachery!—Sophy!—Murder!—I'm robbed—Plague of Lord Coke—I'm non-suited—that villain Nol Pross—Oh! damn Yorkshire! [*Exit at centre door.*

SCENE III.—*A Room at the Toy.*

Enter SOPHIA *hastily, speaking off.*

Sophia. My dear Aircourt! make haste; get us a good chaise and fine horses!—By this my guardian's in a precious fury—Heigho! Eh! Isn't that Lady Arable? [*calls.*] Dear! I'm like a poor bird just got loose, can scarce believe my own happiness.

Enter Lady ARABLE.

Lady Arable. Sophia! what can have brought you to such a house as this? I could scarce believe it was you.

Sophia. O, Lady Arable! I've done the maddest thing—I've eloped from my guardy.

Lady Arable. Eloped! but with who, and what, and how?

Sophia. As to your who, it is with Mr. Aircourt; your how, he came and got me off disguised like a Yorkshire clerk; the what, we'll be married directly.

Lady Arable. Disguised like a clerk! the very circumstance Fib told me! Are you sure your lover's name is—What do you call him?

Sophia. Aircourt.

Lady Arable. Don't be surprised, my dear, if I assure you that your very Mr. Aircourt is no other than my Mr. O'Donovan, that was to have been married to me directly.

Sophia. Dear Lady Arable, how can such a thing come into your head?

Lady Arable. Wasn't his letter of introduction from a Mr. Nol Pross?

Sophia. The very same.

Lady Arable. Believe me, it's beyond a doubt; yet when you beckoned me I hadn't an idea that you were my triumphant rival, ha, ha, ha!

Sophia. No, but seriously, can this be true?

Lady Arable. Most indubitable!—Fib got the whole affair from Povot his valet, ha, ha, ha!

Sophia. Nay, but don't laugh at me, Lady Arable, for I'm exceedingly hurt.

Lady Arable. Pray, what introduction? how came you acquainted?

Sophia. Mere accident; at the dancing master's ball at the London tavern—happened to be my partner.

Lady Arable. Yes; his man told Fib that he had been dancing about London under a fictitious name, and his father Sir Carrol thinks he is just arrived from Paris.

Sophia. Oh, he's one of the most dissembling, cruellest—— [*Cries.*]

Lady Arable. I request my dear Sophia won't imagine that I made the discovery out of jealousy, envy, or any other pretty little female principle of good nature.

Sophia. I'll never see him more—I despise—I'll try to hate him—[*cries.*] Cruel Aircourt! he's gone for a chaise—but let him go by himself for a traitor —I'll go directly back to my prison—I'm so vexed! [*Exit crying.*

Lady Arable. I'll meet Mr. O'Donovan, and bring conviction to his face.

Airc. [*Without.*] Come, my love! the chaise is ready.—[*Enters.*]

Lady Arable. I'm glad to hear it, sir [*turns.*] Sir, I beg ten thousand pardons—I expected another gentleman.

Airc. And I, madam, expected another lady.

Lady Arable. Pray, sir, is your name Aircourt?

Airc. At your service, madam.

Lady Arable. O! what an egregious blunder have I made! my poor Sophia! Sir, I can't wait now for an explanation—As I was the cause, though innocently, of your losing the lady, you shall command every effort of mine to regain her. [*Exit.*

Airc. What magic could have transformed Sophia to Lady Arable?—Here comes this fool!

Enter LARRY KAVANAGH.

Larry. Aircourt, I've been affronted so by Lady Arable—Do you know that she laughed at me this moment as I passed her?

Airc. No!

Larry. She did!—think of laughing at me! Damn me, I'll give her up—with all her beauty and fortune, she is only a widow!

Airc. Aye, a second-hand wife. You're a fine fellow, O'Donovan, and should have a new one.

Larry. I will—I'll make formal proposals for Sophia. I had the sweetest smile from her window just now.

Airc. Gone home? [*aside.*] Was ever such a little twirlabout tee-to-tum.

Larry. I have sent my man to Alibi's to request an interview—but, Aircourt, you told me you were on a love scheme here? What are you about with your girl?

Airc. I don't know. [*Peevish.*]

Larry. Don't know! don't bite me, ha, ha, ha! I see it, you've a puppy rival in the way.

Airc. I have; and a damned troublesome puppy he is—Just as you intend to Sophia, I am told he designs to make proposals for my mistress to her guardian.

Larry. But what objection has this guardian to you?

Airc. Why, I don't know: some busy body has been chattering that I wrote a song upon him, or I intended to have him caricatured in the print-shops; the thing above all others it seems he's most afraid of.

Larry. Gad! I have it—Send an anonymous line to the guardian, that a most notorious hummer has laid a plan to come as a suitor to his ward, but his real purpose to get his person and manner for a caricature print, or song, to turn him into ridicule; and if he is such an unique, he'll take the alarm at once—I warrant your rival trundled out of the house without a hearing, ha, ha, ha!

Airc. And so, O'Donovan, this is your comfortable advice?

Larry. I only wish I had a rival with my Sophia that I might put the joke in practice. What a cursed foolish figure he'd cut!

Airc. You really think he would?

Larry. Oh, by Heaven! it would be the highest —only do try it.

Airc. Well, perhaps I may—You've sent your man, you say, to Alibi?

Larry. Yes; and in three minutes time I shall be there myself and make proposals. But never mind me, Aircourt; do send the letter to your old lad; you may sign yourself "unknown friend," or "Q. in the corner."—Ha! ha! ha! 'twill make a screeching laugh.

Airc. Gad! I think it will—I'll try it however.

[*Exeunt laughing.*

SCENE IV.—ALIBI'S *House.*

Enter ALIBI *and* SOPHIA.

Sophia. Don't mention him; I hate him now as much as ever I loved him.

Alibi. I thought you'd repent of your fondness for your charming Aircourt.

Sophia. Do now let's hear no more of him; and upon my honour I won't run away again.

Alibi. 'Pon my honour, I don't think you will, my little Soph! if a wise brain, brick wall, strong bolt, and double lock can prevent it.

Sophia. Ah! guardian, if a woman's mind is set upon a young fellow with a true heart, handsome face, and elegant person, your wall's a cobweb—bolt, straw—lock, pie-crust—and your brain syllabub!

Alibi. Don't tell me of cobweb—pie-crusts!—You shall find me a spider, Mrs. Lady-bird. [*Puts on his gown and cap.*]

Sophia. Oh that somebody was to see you, ha! ha! ha! I'd have you taken off just as you are now.

Alibi. Take me off! If they gibbet me in their

print-shops, I'll bring my action for a libel! their windows are a nuisance, exhibitions of scandal and indecency, to block up the footpaths and make a harvest for pickpockets.

Enter LARRY KAVANAGH.

Larry. Mr. Alibi—Ma'am, your most——Ha! charming, by heaven! [*Aside.*]

Alibi. Sir!

Sophia. This Chelsea fop to plague me! [*Aside.*]

Larry. I have taken the liberty to wait upon you, in hopes that my addresses to this lady may prove agreeable to her tender inclination and your sage opinion. [*Bows.*]

Alibi. Why, sir, as to the tenderness of that lady's inclinations, that's a matter with me of just—about three halfpence. [*Mimicking* LARRY.]

Sophia. And, sir, the sagacity of that gentleman's opinion with me just—about—a penny farthing under that sum. [*Mimicking* ALIBI.]

Larry. As I have totally forgot the multiplication table, Gad curse me! if I can strike a balance upon this business—But, sir, I love, and will marry this lady; that's my sum total.

Enter BOY.

Boy. [*Giving a letter to* ALIBI.] A man left that for you, sir. [*Exit.*

LARRY *and* SOPHIA *walk up.*

Alibi. [*Reads.*] "An unknown friend warns you against a design to turn you into ridicule by caricaturing you for the print-shops: the person is a noted hummer, and introduced himself to you at Chelsea."—Chelsea! the very fellow! [*Reads.*]—"And to finish his *outre* picture, he's to obtain an interview as a man of fortune in love with your ward Miss Sophia!",

—Oh, oh, my friend!—"Take this hint from yours —Q. in the Corner."

[*Puts the letter up, and holds his face up to* LARRY. Well, look! have you got a likeness?

Larry. Eh!

Alibi. I've a striking phiz, an't I?

Larry. You have a very good phiz, indeed, sir.

Alibi. But when I've the pipe——

Larry. What the devil has he got at now?

Alibi. The tune of the ballad, I suppose, will be bow wow!—or, stop—Derry down's a good tune.

Larry. Sir, I don't know what you mean by derry downs.

Alibi. Don't you? then I'll speak plainer—there's the stairs, and pray, sir, do you walk down, down, down derry, derry down! [*Sings.*]

Sophia. Ha! ha! ha! this is the very thing I was wishing for—I guess how it is—ha! ha! ha!

Larry. The laugh is against somebody, but dam'me if I can tell who.

Sophia. There, sir, you see the attorney to advantage. Guardian, make a face for the gentleman.

Alibi. Ma'am, do you step in [*puts* SOPHIA *in*]; and, sir, do you step out.

Larry. Sir, I'm a person of rank and consequence, and must desire—

Alibi. And I desire you'll pack up your consequence, be your own porter, and carry it out of my house.

Metheglin. [*Without.*] Are you above, Master Alibi?

Larry. Oh, Lady Arable's butler! he can tell you that I'm a person of fashion.

Enter METHEGLIN.

Meth. Ah! what are you here, Larry?—Gad, I forgot.

Alibi. So then, Larry, you're a man of fashion?

Larry. Fellow! I'll see if your lady authorises this insolence to her guests; and as for you, I'll carry your ward by all the powers of love and stratagem. [*Exit.*

Alibi. A goose quill for your stratagem—Damn the fellow! Did you ever see such a puff-crack?—Who is he, Metheglin?

Meth. Can't reveal that without my wife's leave.

Alibi. Wife! Zounds! you hav'n't married her yet?

Meth. No.

Alibi. Where is she?

Meth. So eager to have her little penny settled upon her before our marriage, that she would come with me—she's in the next room.

Katty. [*Without.*] Mr. Metheglin!

Alibi. Her very voice! It is my dear wife! [*Aside.*] Has she much money?

Meth. A power!

Alibi. I feel all my conjugal tenderness revive. Metheglin, reach the ink-stand off the desk yonder.

Meth. She's a jolly body! be civil to her—the pen and ink! ay, ay! [*Exit.*

Alibi. It is she—I gave her time to roll; and the prudent creature in purse and person has gathered like a snow-ball.

Enter KATTY.

Katty. Pray, Mr. Counsellor, do you know much of this husband I am going to marry?

Alibi. I know a husband you did marry. [*With solemnity.*]

Katty. And is it! are you alive, my Bryan! my own honey?

Alibi. Kate! Katty! O my Catherine! [*Embrace.*]

Enter METHEGLIN *with ink-stand.*

Katty. Mr. Metheglin, though now you and I are two, I believe you're an honest man.

Alibi. Mr. Metheglin, your wife turns out to be my wife! [*Exeunt* ALIBI *and* KATTY.

Meth. Is the world at an end? am I myself? Quit me in a half a minute for this big little villain! because he has money—for this false woman to reject my lady!—I'll—I'll lay my heart at her feet and make her happy!—Yes, I'll go to the drawing-room —No—first to the wine cellar!—Cruel Katty! barbarous—hem! [*Exit.*

SCENE.—*Outside of the Toy.*

Enter AIRCOURT *and* LARRY KAVANAGH.

Airc. Ha! ha! ha! what trundled you down without a hearing?

Larry. Gad! as you say, trundled me down without a hearing; but held up his phiz as he called it, and in the most rude and ill-bred manner fairly derry-down'd and bow-wow'd me out of his house.

Airc. Well said, Q. in the corner. [*Aside.*]

Larry. And yet in my vexation I can scarce help laughing—for—brushing through Alibi's hall in my fury, who should I see sitting in the parlour very stately, but my Irish nurse. Prompted by curiosity and another peep at Sophy——

Airc. Sophy! well—

Larry. I popped into the adjoining room, and overheard—Why she's Alibi's wife! and old pettifog is in horrid dread of a most tremendous Irish admirer, who paid his addresses on the supposition of her being a rich widow.

Airc. Ay, well!

Larry. Alibi fears he'll follow her from Ireland

and cut his throat, ha! ha! ha!—he is called Captain Kilmeinham O'Squramough!

Airc. Psha! Damn your grinning, let's hear.

Larry. Why this hero is really it seems a devil of a wicked fellow—has been in the German service, and in some of the most dangerous actions on the Turkish frontiers.

Airc. Alibi in dread of this formidable Hibernian Hector! this may prove a *coup-de-main.* [*Aside.*]

Larry. But, Aircourt, about your mistress—What have you done with your fool of a rival?

Airc. As great a fool as ever—he has been just now communicating a circumstance to me that I hope will put it into my power to jockey him once for all, ha! ha! ha!

Larry. Why, what a cursed blockhead must he be, to make you of all men his confidante!

Airc. A cursed blockhead!

Larry. Jockey him.

Airc. I will—ha! ha! ha!

Larry. But you promis'd to assist me in getting Sophia out.

Airc. If I don't get her out may I be——Well, good bye! when next we meet, you shall hear something of your girl that will astonish you.

Larry. Thank ye—Adieu!

Airc. I'll about it, my boy—I'll jockey him, ha! ha! ha! [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room at Lady* ARABLE'S.

Enter METHEGLIN *with Wine.*

Meth. Perfidious Katty! But let her go to the —— Indeed the black gentleman has got her already.—

Ah, for—[*fills and drinks*] sweet revenge—I could quaff aquafortis.—My lovely mistress, Lady Arable, I'm now all yours—I'll return your smiles with ogles, your leers with kisses, your money with—myself. But Sir Carrol seems so bent upon his son's marrying her—How to ward that! If I discover to Sir Carrol that Larry's not his son—But Katty told me that under the seal of secrecy—Honour—honour—honour! As I'm sure of my lady's heart, what if I start this young stranger at her—Sir Carrol perceives it; his proud Irish blood is up, and he commands his son to think no more of her. In steps I, and all's my own. Oh, the beagle! Hip, boy, holloa!

Enter Young O'DONOVAN *with papers in his hand.*

I've a secret for you: take a drop out of the bottom of that glass.

O'Don. I thank you; but you see I'm in a hurry. [*Going.*]

Meth. Stop—A false woman's worse than—an empty glass—Adieu to the cellar delights!——As I've made up my mind to marry my mistress, I must hire a butler of my own.

O'Don. You marry your lady! Very good indeed! ha! ha! ha! Pray, isn't the match concluded between Lady Arable and Mr. O'Donovan?

Meth. Yes; it's at an end, if that's a conclusion. [*Bell rings.*]—Aye, pull away now, my lady; but presently, when I'm your lord and master, I'll teach you to knock my bells about in that manner.

O'Don. If Lady Arable's refusal of Sir Carrol's son is true, though I cou'dn't rejoice at her union with O'Donovan, yet I most sensibly feel at every cause of uneasiness to his worthy father. [*Aside.*]

Meth. It's not birth; beauty is the mark women look at—it is not pedigree—not for the root, but the

fruit of the tree their mouths water.—Lady Arable has cast an eye upon you—and two upon me. [*Aside.*

O'Don. How!

Meth. Fib told me that her ladyship swore this morning you were the prettiest man in the house—except me. [*Aside.*] I'll bring you together—you shall jink Larry——Hem! I mean 'Squire O'Donovan.

O'Don. But, Metheglin, just now you were going to marry your mistress, ha! ha! ha!

Meth. Never mind—I'll tell her how you love her.

O'Don. [*Surprised and angry.*] Me!—I don't—Did I ever tell you any such thing? Lady Arable lose a thought upon me!—If I could think it possible, sooner than distress the worthy Sir Carrol, by being the cause that she rejects his son, I'd quit the house immediately. [*Aside.*] [*Bell rings.*

Meth. Go to her! go, go! [*Pushes* O'Donovan *off.*] Now I've primed him with love, he'll be talking soft: then I'll send Sir Carrol in upon them; but if the beagle shou'd jink me in this affair. [*Bell rings*]. —There, she can't do without Metheglin!—How do I look? [*Looks in a glass.*] That glass of red mantles in my cheek and sparkles in my eye—Smile, you monkey! [*Grimaces.*] The other corner—the other eye—Oh bravo! I'll put on my wedding clothes, white fring'd gloves, bag wig, and clap my head in a new brigadier—then have at her noble countenance—I'll go to Alibi's, and see that the marriage articles are drawn up—Soon shall I be lord of all her houses, consuls, hogsheads, jointures, mills, meadows, plate, and puncheons. [*Exit.*

Enter Sophia *running.*

Sophia. Lady Arable! [*calling.*] Where can she be?

Enter FIB.

Fib, where's your lady?

Fib. I'm looking for her, ma'am.—The jeweller has brought home her picture—I believe 'twas intended for Sir Carrol to give to Mr. O'Donovan.

Sophia. What! the flashy fool that's teazing me? [*Opens the case.*] Dear! it's very like Lady Arable. —Oh! here she is.—Fib, go; I want to consult your lady about my love affairs.

Fib. Ah, my poor lady, I fancy, has love affairs of her own! [*Exit.*

Enter Lady ARABLE.

Lady Arable. Sophia! why you fly in and out like a bird from the nest!

Sophia. Lord, my guardian has got a new wife!—She let me escape—I told her I knew where there was real genuine Irish snuff to be sold, and that I'd go and buy her some—But, dear, it wou'd be very wicked in me to set the poor old soul sneezing, he! he! he!—Lady Arable, I came to ask about Aircourt—I suppose you think me very forward?

Lady Arable. We must be blameless ourselves before we censure others.—But, Sophia, you found I was wrong; that your Aircourt and Mr. O'Donovan are distinct persons.

Sophia. Yes, yes: oh, such a trick as Aircourt served him, ha! ha! But yet I fear my lover, from thinking himself sure of my heart, will grow careless.—If I cou'd but make him jealous—He despises his present rival too much for that—Lord! Lady Arable, if that handsome young man you've here would walk before my windows, sighing and kissing his handkerchief, it would be such a spur to Aircourt—Oh, he'd whip me off to Gretna Green at once.

Lady Arable. But, Sophia, what if that handsome young man should not be quite indifferent to me.

Sophia. You're in love with him; I see it in your face—Lord, never mind his being poor!—have him, and we'll all four run away together.

Lady Arable. Though I flatter myself he's touch'd with mutual tenderness, yet the disparity of our situation can't suffer him to disclose it.

Sophia. O the fate of us poor women! We must walk round about the dear object, and, like a troubled ghost, never speak till we're spoken to; whilst the men can spout away—"Oh, never, my most adorable creature!"—"I die for you!"—"My angel!"—"I languish!"—"'Pon my honour!"—"My love!"—"Oh! oh!" [*Mimicks.*]

Lady Arable. Ha! ha! ha! As you say, Sophia, it never can come from me, therefore we must both pine in thought.

Sophia. It shall come from you though; you're a friend to my love, and I'll be a friend to yours, he! he! he!—Lady Arable, since you're out of all hope with this young man, tell him I have a *penchant* for him—it will make Aircourt so jealous.

Lady Arable. Well, Sophia, I will—It may at least be a trial how his heart is really affected towards myself.

Sophia. Lady Arable, shew him this; it's my picture. [*Gives it.*]

[*Lady* ARABLE *going to open it,* SOPHIA *prevents her.*

Lord, you've seen it a thousand times! Tell him that's a strong likeness of a lady that admires him.—Here he is—Now, now! [*Runs off.*

Enter O'DONOVAN.

O'Don. Madam, as Sir Carrol desired, I have looked over those papers.

Lady Arable. Well, well.—I'm entrusted, sir, with

a strange kind of commission—You'll not be very surprised; for these things are more common than they should be.—There is a certain lady, who, if your heart is quite disengaged, is inclined to entertain some ideas in your favour.

O'Don. Madam! [*Surprised and hurt.*]

Lady Arable. The lady is a very particular friend of mine, and will have a very ample fortune.—Now, if that and Sophia's pretty features captivate him, farewell my silly hopes! [*Aside.*]

O'Don. Your ladyship is inclined to amuse yourself at the expence of my vanity.

Lady Arable. I assure you she is not a mean conquest.—You may judge of her charms from this her picture; with which, to spare her the indelicacy of a declaration, she desired me to present you. [*Gives the picture.*]

O'Don. [*Opens it indifferently.*] How! [*surprised*] Impossible! Oh, Lady Arable! my heart, while I confess it sensibly awake to each perfection, never harboured a thought of the divine original. [*Kisses it.*

Lady Arable. Then he knows Sophia! Her money must have been his first attraction, and doubtless brought him to this neighbourhood.——Divine! [*Walks angry.*]

O'Don. She's offended.—First try, and then punish my presumption! Cruel of you, madam, to betray me into a confession, that before I could make I'd have perish'd.—Pardon my audacity—I return you your picture, and relinquish every hope—I can never shew my face again—to you—or my benefactor—Heaven protect!—— my heart is full!—— Adieu, most honoured lady! [*Exit.*

Lady Arable. [*Looks at the picture.*] Heavens! my own picture! What a prank has Sophia played me! —What must he think of me? And I to wrong his purity by my doubts—Yes, I have blasphemed the god of my idolatry—but was I quite certain that he

entertained one tender thought for me, for the first time in my life I'd rejoice at being born to a splendid fortune. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A Hall with several Doors at* ALIBI'S. —*Wine and Tea.*

Enter KATTY.

Katty. Lord, what I fool was I to let that young creature go out and buy me snuff, and it already to cause a quarrel between me and my little old husband!—He said "The devil's in your nose, Katty!" and that's what he said, sure enough.

Alibi. [*Without.*] Go in, I say!

Enter ALIBI *with* SOPHIA.

She run out to buy snuff, indeed! And there I find her walking about the palace gardens.—Zounds! I never knew they sold snuff in the palace gardens.

Sophia. Let me peep at this letter the man slipt me—I'm sure he was a waiter at the Toy [*opens it.*] It is from my dear Aircourt.

Katty. But my pretty soul, where's the Irish snuff?

Sophia. Get along, you old fool. [*Peruses letter.*]

Alibi. Running about after you has made me so thirsty. [*Drinks.*] [*They all sit.*

Oh, Sophy! Oh, Katty! here had I retired after all my turmoils to enjoy the snug chimney corner of life; yet, on a sudden, I'm wound up in cares like a silk-worm in his woof—all of my own spinning too —In this country I'm sure I can't stay long; and if I were to venture back to Ireland, there I have ready before me that damn'd terrible Irish cossack.—— Katty, my love, what is that hector's name, the captain that loved you so much in Ireland?

Katty. Captain Kilmeinham O'Squramough!—

Faith, and he did love me! If he was to come over he'd shoot me in your arms.

Alibi. I'd as lief he would shoot you anywhere else.

Airc. [*Without.*] Tell her it's her friend Captain Kilmeinham O'Squramough! just come from Dublin. [*With the brogue, very loud.*]

Alibi. What! [*Terrified.*]

Sophia. My dear Aircourt keeps his promise to free me. [*Aside.*]

Katty. Oh, husband! 'tis Captain Kilmeinham O'Squramough, and seems to have been at his bottle—Here will be cutting and shooting!

Alibi. Cutting and shooting!

Sophia. A captain! Perhaps he will take a dish of tea with us, ha! ha! ha!

Alibi. Tea! give him some aquafortis!

[*Glass broke without.*

Zounds! if he hasn't broke the lamp in the hall!—Who's there? [*Trembling.*]

[KATTY *and* SOPHIA *exeunt.*

Enter AIRCOURT *disguised.*

Airc. Sir, as I am a gentleman, I think it rudeness to force into any man's house.

Alibi. Really, sir, I am somewhat of your way of thinking.

Airc. I find you are, sir; as we both think of having the same woman.—With submission, I think that's damn'd impudent in one of us.

Alibi. I think so too, sir; but pray, to whom am I indebted for the honour of this visit?

Airc. To that amiable inconstant, the widow Kavanagh.

Alibi. The very desperado! Sir, I imagine you design to affront me.

Airc. I came on purpose.

Alibi. Civil creature! [*Aside.*]

Airc. Look you, sir; I have had the honour to serve at home and abroad—Oczakow and Balbriggin—the Danube and the Liffey—Volunteer reviews and Belgrade sieges—all one to Kilmeinham O'Squramough—And I have learnt in Ireland and Germany by tactic, theoretic and practic, that there are two ways of doing things. The first is [*fills*]—health [*drinks*]—that's one way! The second is [*fills*]—Sir, your health [*drinks*]—that's another way.

Alibi. Now, sir, with deference to your tactics, those two ways seem to me but one.

Airc. Right, sir; [*fills*]—two and one make three [*drinks*]—You see, sir, how I love my bottle.

Alibi. I see how you love my bottle! The greatest marauder I ever saw. [*Aside.*]

Airc. How can you keep such wine?

Alibi. It's very difficult.—I wish I had a constable. [*Aside.*]

Airc. Now, our Irish claret glides down like new milk—makes a man sprightly and good-natur'd; but your damn'd gunpowder port sets my kiln afire [*strikes his forehead*], and makes me as hot and as wicked—It has just primed me for business; and now for the business that brought me before your citadel.—Hark'e, friend, as I doat on Mrs. Kavanagh, the man that loves her is a scoundrel!

Alibi. Sir, we still agree in opinion; but this widow happens to be my wife.

Airc. What! then you've married her, hah! O you most outrageous——

Alibi. But, sir, long before you ever saw her.

Airc. Then you didn't give me fair chance—election or rejection, that's the word! But it can't be! She was never before in England.

Alibi. But I was in Ireland.

Airc. Sir, I have done—I ask pardon for all favours! [*Bows low.*]

Alibi. [*Bows low.*] Now you're cool, sir—if I shou'd thrust myself into your house, break your glass lantern, and make all this uproar, what wou'd you say?

Airc. Faith, sir, I'd say nothing at all at all; but I'd like a crow have the honour to take you up to the garret window, decently drop you down upon the flags, and crack you like a cockle.—Oh, I'd knock your head against the walls of Bender, as Charles the XIIth did the Janissaries!—I'd kick you just so [*throws down the table and breaks the china.*]—I'd turn you out of my house just so—Get along, you scoundrel!——I'd demolish all your aiders and abetters——

Enter METHEGLIN, *drest as a bridegroom*—AIRCOURT *shoves him.*

I'd slay you and every scoundrel who'd take a lady from Captain Kilmeinham O'Squramough! [*Exit.*

Alibi. Sophia! The marauder's gone kown the road—Stop him, and I'll give you a hundred guineas!

Meth. Me! Wou'dn't stop a man on the king's highway for five thousand!

Alibi. O my ward!—Get along, you muzzy-headed fool—If you won't help to recover Sophia, get home to your sideboard—Furies! if she meets Aircourt, she's irrecoverably lost!—Sophy! [*Exit.*

Meth. Muzzy-headed!—Fool!—Sideboard!—— Very well.—Yes, I think I'll introduce one Sir Carrol O'Donovan into this house.—Yes, he may be listen'd to, though I can't—I will—Master Larry.—Oh, ho!—Ay, ay—Master Alibi—I'll discover—— Aye—aye— [*Exit.*

SCENE—*As before.*

Enter O'DONOVAN.

O'Don. How unlucky this mischievous fool Metheglin to acquaint Sir Carrol of my passion for Lady Arable; hers for me I have proved was entirely his own fancy. My benefactor must think me presumptuous and ungrateful. No; I'll return no more—This lawyer may afford me at least a temporary employment—if not, I'll directly for London. Sir Carrol seems disturbed. [*Retires.*

Enter Sir CARROL.

Sir Car. May I believe Metheglin's story—this young Larry, as he calls him, whom I considered my son, really Alibi's!—Would they graft their rascally bramble on the noble stock of the O'Donovan's? Then, my poor unhappy child, whoever he is, must go by their name—Lawrence Kavanagh! Perhaps they have abandoned him, and he now languishes in penury—perhaps—dead!

O'DONOVAN *advances.*

Ha! my lad, we were all surprised at your abrupt departure.

O'Don. Sir Carrol, though I confess myself unworthy of your bounty, I'm not yet so base as to accept obligations from the person I have injured.

Sir Car. Why, Metheglin has been telling us—

O'Don. Truth! By insidiously cherishing a passion for your son's intended lady, I fear I have frustrated your favourite wish.

Sir Car. So a point of gratitude impelled him to relinquish the affluence that probably offered a reward to his merit—a noble-minded youth [*aside.*]—How you first became acquainted with Lady Arable I do not ask; but had she been more candid, you

should not have been hurt, nor her ladyship troubled by my proposals for my son. The opinion I conceived of you at first sight has not deceived me. You have interested me to a more particular inquiry; and first tell me what is your name?

O'Don. Kavanagh.

Sir Car. How! your christian name!

O'Don. Lawrence.

Sir Car. Who are your parents? [*Quick, and with great emotion.*]

O'Don. Sir, I have just now seen my mother in this house, but I think she did not know me.

Sir Car. She nursed my son!

O'Don. [*Bows.*]

Sir Car. It is—my Edward!—my generous boy! [*embraces him*]—so long the forlorn child of indigence—alike an unhappy subject for the scorn of pride and the tear of pity. [*Puts his handkerchief to his eyes.*]

O'Don. Can this be?

Alibi. [*Without.*] No, wife, you shan't prevail upon me to connive at your imposition.

Enter ALIBI.

Since Katty has squeaked, I'll slip my own neck out of the noose. [*Aside.*]

Sir Car. Well, Mr. Alibi, alias Kavanagh! [ALIBI *surprised.*] I left you in Ireland twenty years ago a profligate young man, and now I find you in England a hardened old knave.

Alibi. Sir!

Sir Car. In youth, when the passions take the rein, vice may be the effect of folly; but when judgment is matured by age, a vicious man is a confirmed scoundrel. Where's my son, rascal?

Alibi. [*Trembling.*] Indeed, Sir Carrol, I'd myself give a thousand pounds to find him.

Sir Car. Look, honour—and ask his pardon.

Enter Lady ARABLE.

O'Don. Merciful heaven! I came hither to seek —but to find such a father! [*Kneels.*]

Sir Car. Rise, my dear son; I'm not more rejoiced at finding you, than by fortune's knocking at the door of poverty to see it opened by an honest man.

Enter METHEGLIN.

Lady Arable. This gentleman your son, Sir Carrol! This, I hope, may in some measure justify what I dreaded would prove the inexcusable error of my heart.

Meth. Your choice of me, error, my lady! [*All stare.*]

Sir Car. Ha! ha! ha! Mr. Metheglin, I fear you've been in a little mistake here; but as it has discovered your perfidious Katty and her husband's imposture upon me, you shan't lose your place at the sideboard.

Meth. Sideboard! My wedding suit, new white gloves and brigadier wig!—Ah! you'll be yet Sir Edward! Title turns it—Oh, woman! sacrifice happiness to vanity!

Enter LARRY.

Larry. Ah, my haughty goddess! your consent comes now too late.—Upon my honour, you cannot have me!

Meth. Well said, Larry!

Larry. Larry!

Sir Car. Thank Heaven, you are no son of mine! There is your father! [*Pointing to* ALIBI.]

Alibi. Sir Carrol's right. This is his young gentleman, and you are mine.

Meth. How do you do, Larry?

Larry. Larry! what the devil do you Larry me

for?—Your son! Eh?—Old Alibi's son! [*Noise without.*]—What is the meaning of all this?

Alibi. The captain again! Hide that bottle, and lock the china cupboard.

Meth. Give me the bottle, and lock us up together. [*Retires.*

Enter AIRCOURT *and* SOPHIA.

Airc. Be it known from Belgrade to Balbriggin that old gentlemen may keep their widows! for this lady is now the wife of Captain Kilmeinham O'Squramough.

Alibi. Your wife! And who are you?

Airc. Mr. Alibi; I supposed from the known venality of your character, had I asked your consent fairly and openly I never should have gained it; but instead of a needy adventurer, my Sophia shall prove, that to obtain her charming self was the sole object of her affectionate Aircourt.

Larry. No, my dear fellow, you took her off for me!

Airc. No, my dear fellow, I took her off for myself!

Larry. But you said for me.

Airc. Pho! 'twas only the "Lie of the Day!"—With any other motive I'd scorn to circumvent a friend; but in love all stratagem is allowable.

Meth. Ha! ha! ha! how do you do, Larry? [*Exit.*

Alibi. This Aircourt!

Airc. Aye, poor clerk Robin! who used to play with the maids.

Alibi. Mind, her fortune is still in my hands—I'm her guardian.

Sophia. No, sir, you are not. The name for executor in my mother's will is Alibi: now, as I understand that yours is Kavanagh, we shall make your part in the trust void by the misnomer!

Alibi. Here's petticoat pleading! I must make her a chamber council, and be curst to me!

Sophia. He! he! he! How did you like my picture, sir?

Lady Arable. Ah, you arch one!

Sir Car. Reimburse the four thousand it has cost me in the training of your son Lawrence! and give this lady her fortune, or for your fraud on me I'll prosecute you to beggary! To acquire riches was the cause of your crime; the loss of them now be your punishment. The events of this day have proved, that the Eye which sees all directs an unerring hand, to give vice the lash, and drop on the brow of honour the blooming wreath of unfading happiness.

THE END.

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